

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 1882.

AN Episcopalian exchange says

We do not endorse the sentiment of an honest Indian who testified in court the other day that another Indian "was not a real Christian, but a Presbyterian;" but we can say that there is room and a welcome in the Church for all Presbyterians who want "to try to do better," and we think they will find it "a more excellent way."

A zealous Episcopalian, who resided not a thousand miles from the head of Lake Ontario, announced with considerable gusto to a friend of his, that a family belonging to another denomination had "come over to the Church." The friend asked the reason why. This was the reason given: "*In their Church they are very particular like—they have a good deal of discipline. In ours we have more liberty. We allow card playing and dancing.*" No comments.

THE late Dr. James Hamilton had a capital illustration of how general prayers and "oblique sermons" fail to satisfy the soul in the emergencies of life. A Scotchman who had but one prayer was asked by his wife to pray by the bedside of their dying child. The good man struck out on the old track, and soon came to the usual petition for the Jews. As he went on with the time-honoured quotation, "Lord, turn again the captivity of Zion," etc., his wife broke in saying: "*Eh! man, you're aye drawn out for that Jews; but it's our bairn that's deidin.*" Then clasp ing her hand, she cried: "*Lord, help us! oh, give us back our darling if it be Thy holy will; and if he is to be taken, oh, take him to Thyself.*" That woman knew how to pray, which was more than her husband did. An "oblique sermon" is not prayer. A pious soliloquy is not prayer. An audible meditation or a doctrinal dissertation is not prayer. Telling the Lord a hundred things He knows better than we do is not prayer. If persons who lead others in prayer had as vivid a conception of what they want, and as earnest a desire to get it as this poor woman, would there be as many complaints about long prayers as we hear?

THOSE people who think that ministers are fitted for no heavier secular work than presiding at services, socials and sewing circles, must have discovered their mistake when they read Principal Grant's brilliant speech before the Private Bills Committee on the Temporalities case. The learned Principal of Queen's proved himself the equal, and a good deal more, of every lawyer and Member of Parliament that ventured to cross swords with him. Had he a seat in the Commons he would rank with Sir John and Mr. Blake, and some people not particularly attached to the clergy say he would soon prove a stronger man than either. One good thing about this Temporalities tussle is that it has shown to the world that Presbyterian ministers can hold their own against all comers, even in the parliamentary arena. There is more debating power in our General Assembly ten times over than in the House of Commons. Any of our Synods is a more intellectual body than the Commons of Canada. We have great respect for many of our public men on both sides of politics, but it is time that the theory that all the intellect of the country is at the bar and in politics was exploded. Principal Grant helped on this explosion immensely at Ottawa. If any really great question were before this country, vitally affecting its interests, we venture to say that in the discussion of that question ministers would take a more prominent and intelligent part than any class of public men in the Dominion.

THE U. P. Church on the other side of the lines has just come through a most exciting organ agitation.

At one time it was supposed that the agitation would do considerable injury, but later accounts say that calmer counsels are likely to prevail. Common-sense people on both sides are beginning to ask, "Is it worth while splitting the Church for the sake of the organ?" This is really the main question in most organ controversies in Canadian congregations. The question is not so much "Would the instrument be a good thing?" as "Would it pay to stir up strife, and finally split a congregation, for the sake of putting in the instrument?" The man who, in the face of the history of organ controversies in several Canadian congregations, says it is better to have prolonged strife and bitterness than do without a melodeon, by so saying proves that he is unfit to have anything to do with church management. An instrument may be a good thing, but it costs too much if its introduction disturbs the harmony and destroys the usefulness of a Christian congregation, and makes Presbyterianism a stench in the neighbourhood. The mode of conducting the psalmody in a congregation is a small matter as compared with many others that should be uppermost in the mind of every earnest Christian. We have some excellent congregations that have instrumental music, and some equally good ones that have not. The best people in our best congregations are not troubling themselves about the matter.

TEMPORALITIES FUND.

THE measure before Parliament for settling the Temporalities difficulty has passed the Commons, and may be regarded as safe. After all the beneficiary claims are fully satisfied, whatever surplus is over is to be divided *pro rata* among the congregations at the time of the union in 1875; so that any of those which did not then go into the union may have their share if still congregations, while the rest will remain with the united Church. What the surplus may eventually be, of course no one can say, and when such a division shall take place is as uncertain as the duration of human life. In any case this relegates the final adjustment to a tolerably distant day; and in the meantime it is to be noted that the congregations indicated are merely those which refused to go into the union in 1875. These were very few at the most, and some of them may very possibly have ceased to exist, or may have come into the united Church before the period spoken of arrives. In the meantime we suppose this settlement is final though some think a royal veto to the measure is not only possible, but exceedingly likely. We are not afraid.

PRESBYTERIAN ITINERANCY.

OUR excellent Methodist contemporary, "Zion's Herald," of Boston, says:—

With the privilege of retaining a pastor for three years, the majority of the churches exchange their pulpits in one and two. Our people have been educated to often changes, and they are not usually ungrateful to them. The neighbouring churches, whose pulpits, by a pleasant fiction, are called permanent, average terms of only about three years.

Some years ago, a member of an Iowa Presbytery, during a discussion on the relative merits of the pastorate and "stated supply," gave it as his opinion that it was better for the Iowa minister to be inducted. The brother supported his view in this way: "If a minister engages as stated supply for a year, he must remain until his term expires; if he is inducted, he may leave when he pleases!" Evidently the "permanent pulpit" is a "pleasing fiction" over there. It is a fact, as our contemporary says, that the "permanent" pulpits have an average not much higher than the itinerancy. We would like to know what the average in our own Church is. It must certainly be higher than the Methodist average, though how much we cannot say. One thing is clear—the tendency is towards shorter pastorates. Against this tendency every well-wisher of the Church should set his face like flint. A pastorate may be too long as well as too short, but for every pastorate that is too long there are fifty too short. The practice of healing every difficulty by removing the minister is most pernicious in its results. The parties who raise the difficulty with Mr. A., will likely sooner or later raise one with his successor, Mr. B., and so there is nothing gained. If some people leave or get soured because the minister remains, some are sure to get soured or leave because he moves, and so there is nothing gained in that direction either. There are cases, of course, in which it is for the interest and comfort of all parties that the pastoral tie should be

broken; but we most strenuously oppose the system of settling all difficulties by making a vacancy. Ministers themselves are often to blame for very short pastorates. Difficulties meet them, and they resolve on a change, forgetting that difficulties, even the very same difficulties, may arise wherever they go. Sin is at the bottom of every trouble, and sin exists everywhere. When congregations learn that the *new* minister won't be an angel, and may not preach as well as the old one when he has preached as long, and all ministers learn that other congregations have difficulties as well as their own; when we all, ministers and people, have learned to walk more closely with God, long pastorates will be the rule. Every loyal Presbyterian should oppose unnecessary pastoral changes. If we are to have the disadvantages of the itinerancy, let us have its advantages also.

THE LATE ELECTION AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

THE election of President of the Students' Society in the University took place on Friday last, and was, we are glad to know, in every way a more creditable affair than it has too frequently been. As we have sometimes had to say very plain things about some of the proceedings of our "studious youth," we are the more pleased to note this change, so creditable to themselves as gentlemen, and at the same time so encouraging to the genuine friends and well-wishers of our Provincial Institution. Drunken orgies, whether at elections or social gatherings, are not the most efficient means for displaying either manhood or scholarship. We are glad, therefore, to know that the more intelligent and gentlemanly of the students are taking matters more into their own hands, and are determined to show that if there are among them still, more or fewer of those who aforesaid were described as "sons of Belial, clothed with infamy and wine," such are not to be taken as typical of the undergraduates of University College, or to be regarded as ruling in their counsels or electing their office-bearers. If a young man has little hope of passing as a genius by remaining sober, he will have a still poorer chance by trying the opposite role.

FEARS FOR THE OLDER PROVINCES.

WE see that in various quarters fears are being expressed that the present movement of population to the North-West will act injuriously upon the interests of the older Provinces of the Confederation, so as seriously to retard their onward progress in wealth, population, and general prosperity. The young, the energetic and well-to-do, it is said, are going and will continue to go, and the best of these will never return. A woful picture is accordingly drawn of the final result. The old, the halt, the maimed, the lame and the blind will be all who are left; farms will go out of cultivation, everything will sink into a state of inanition and premature decay, and what was hailed as a most auspicious movement will be found in the end fraught with every kind of disaster.

We have no sympathy with such prophets of woe, and no faith in their gloomy anticipations ever being realized. If the settled Provinces of Canada had been inhospitable and barren regions, from which at best the inhabitants could extract only a precarious and very meagre subsistence, such anticipations would have been only natural when a rich and inviting country was discovered, and offered for settlement in some such proximity as the north-western part of Canada is to the older Provinces. And who with any kindness of heart would in such circumstances have tried to prevent the struggling and poverty-stricken inhabitants from making a change so advantageous to themselves? The facts, however, are in this case very different—at least as far as larger portions of these Provinces are concerned. The self-adjusting process will go on. Some sections of country will very possibly be somewhat depleted, but the gain upon the whole will be unquestionable. No doubt the gambling in lots, at present at fever heat, will have the natural result of all gambling in the impoverishment and bitter disappointment of not a few. But this is an incident which may occur anywhere, and indeed is more or less going on all the time in the various forms of speculation and commercial "corners." It is to be deplored that there should be such wild eagerness to be rich without labour. That, however, will speedily