

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN,

— PUBLISHED BY THE —

Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Company

(C. BLACKETT ROBINSON),

AT 5 JORDAN STREET, - TORONTO.

TERMS: \$2 per annum, in advance

ADVERTISING TERMS: Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, 1.50 per line; 1 year \$2.50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1885.

ONE of the lodges in this city in connection with an influential secret society struck the name of a member off its roll the other day, the charge being that said member is an Agnostic. It appears that one of the rules of the Society is that an Agnostic is not eligible for membership. Had a Presbytery struck off the name of one of its members for heresy, there would have been a howl all along the Free Thinking line about "heresy hunts," "ecclesiastical despotism," "clerical tyranny," the "dark ages," "bigotry," "intolerance," "persecution," "Blue Laws of Connecticut," the "rack," the "thumb screw" and several other things. Nobody questions the right of this Society to enforce its own laws and preserve its own constitution intact. There is no howl about persecution when it expels a member. Why not deal as fairly with the Church? The fact is, that the people who howl about persecution when the Church does its duty have no especial love for liberty, but they have a very pronounced hatred of the Church. That is the reason they howl.

OUR House of Commons did not cover itself with glory the other day when the Scott Act was under discussion. On a straight vote only about a dozen members could muster courage enough to vote squarely against the Act; but, when an opportunity occurred to destroy it indirectly, the number went up with suspicious rapidity. These Ottawa Solons had not the pluck to say "nay" to Prohibition, but a good many of them were quite anxious to give the privilege of selling liquor to so many people that a thirsty man could easily supply himself with stimulants even though the Act were in force. It would have been far more manly for those who tried to destroy the Act by a side wind to have voted directly against it. Any man, in or out of Parliament, has a right to vote against the Scott Act if his conscience tells him to do so; but voting in favour of a law, and then trying to indirectly destroy its effect, is a mean, cowardly piece of business. Such dodging ill becomes a legislator or, for that matter, any other man. If a majority of the House of Commons really believe that the Scott Act is a bad measure, they would repeal it at once. Burke told the electors of Bristol that he had "advanced their interests contrary to their opinions." But it takes a man, a high-minded man, to talk in that way. It is to be feared that there not many Burkes at Ottawa.

THE Synod of Hamilton and London is one of the most energetic and business-like courts in the Church. The brethren of that Synod spend no time in beating about the bush and arranging preliminaries. On the first morning of the session they take a firm hold of the most important business and, as Lincoln used to say, "keep pegging away" until they discuss nearly every vital question before the Church. And they "peg" with an amount of vigour that is refreshing. The last meeting seems to have been one of the best and that is saying a good deal. The programme arranged for the Assembly contains an overture on summer sessions in college, another on the right of Presbyteries to nominate Moderators of Assembly, a third on the supply of vacancies, and a fourth on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. These are all vital questions, except that referring to the election of Moderators which is important only in so far as it affects the inherent rights of Presbyteries. Our readers will pardon us for saying that these are some of the questions on which THE PRESBYTERIAN has been "pegging

away" for the past year, and it gives us no little pleasure to see that one of the largest and most independent Synods in the Church has taken hold of them with a firm hand. The Synod also discussed their reports on the State of Religion, on Sabbath Schools, on Temperance, on the Sabbath, and on the Bible in Schools with their usual vigour. Altogether, it was a good meeting.

TALMAGE paid Toronto a flying visit last week, and delivered two lectures which were greatly enjoyed by those who like his style. Perhaps, the best possible description of this Brooklyn preacher would be to say: Talmage is Talmage. Undoubtedly his strong point is his individuality. Without the slightest effort at originality of thought or expression, he makes points as nobody else ever makes them. His utterance of the most commonplace idea makes it striking and attractive. He could not be flat or dull if he tried. His writings are just as fresh and striking as his sermons and speeches. Almost anybody can pick a sentence of Talmage's out of a thousand. There is one thing about Talmage that every manly man must admire. For the last twenty years he has been most savagely assailed by critics of every kind, but the attacks have never ruffled him in the slightest degree. The abuse of various kinds heaped upon him would have driven most men insane, but Talmage smiles serenely at his critics and goes on with his work. His congregation has now, we believe, the largest, or second largest, membership in the great American Presbyterian Church. He preaches the old Gospel in its purity, but states its doctrines in modern language, and illustrates them in a way that suits himself and edifies his congregation. Of course, those people who think that all preachers should be run in the same mould, and preach in the same manner and with the same tone, are "down on Talmage." It does seem a little strange to hear a minister who cannot keep two or three dozen people together denouncing Talmage for his methods. But then it pleases him and doesn't hurt Talmage.

IN the discussion on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund in the Synod of Hamilton and London, the other day, Dr. McDonald said:

A good many laymen have very strong feelings on the subject. This fund has too little attention bestowed upon it. Some of the difficulties of the fund were occasioned because it was not known whether it was a Church scheme. It should be a Church scheme, and mainly managed by those who have no beneficiary interest in the scheme.

True, every word of it. We should be very much surprised if a good many laymen were not thoroughly ashamed of the pittance that is now doled out to our worn-out ministers. The fund has altogether too little attention given to it. Whatever may have been the difficulties connected with its inception and early working, it should now be put on a basis that every one will understand and its interests pushed with vigour. We quite agree with Dr. McDonald in thinking that the scheme should be managed mainly by men who have no beneficiary interest in it. The Widows' Fund originated, we believe, with the eldership, and, if we remember rightly, another Hamilton elder, Mr. James Osborne, had a good deal to do with giving it a successful start. That fund is now an unspeakable blessing to the Church. Just how much good it does, our Father alone only knows. The men who started it shall have their full reward. Now, won't half-a-dozen energetic laymen give this other fund a lift? We believe they will. Dr. McDonald and Mr. Charlton are appointed to bring the matter before the Assembly. A better start could not be made. Neither Mr. Middlemiss nor any other man can make the fund a success without the aid of about half-a-dozen of the best business men in the Church. That is what we want and are going to have.

THE SYNOD MEETING AT HAMILTON.

DISTRICT Synods are no longer open to the objection that they only add to the symmetrical completeness of the Presbyterian system. Their usefulness, instead of diminishing, is steadily growing. One reason urged for their adoption at the formation of a General Assembly in Canada was that they would intercept appeal cases and dispose of them without occupying the precious time of the General Assembly. In some instances Synods have accomplished this work successfully. But, as is often the case when serious differences have arisen, the parties in the conflict are

generally anxious to obtain the authoritative decision of the Supreme Court of the Church. One of the many gratifying features of last week's meeting of the Synod of Hamilton and London was the fact that not a single appeal case was before the Court. It speaks well for the peace and harmony existing in the various Presbyteries composing the Synod, that no appeal was taken from any of them to be adjudicated on by the intermediary court. If the custom observed in Assize Courts where no criminal cases have to be tried prevailed in Ecclesiastical Courts, the Moderator of the Synod of Hamilton and London would this year have been entitled to a pair of white gloves.

Though a good sized audience was present in Mac-Nab Street Church, Hamilton, Monday evening, 13th inst., at the opening sermon by the retiring Moderator, it was remarked that, in a city where there are so many Presbyterians, it might have been still larger. Why is it that there is not more interest manifested by the people generally on these occasions? The sermon preached by the Rev. D. H. Fletcher was a model Synod sermon, earnest, practical, evangelical, and brief enough to satisfy the most fastidious stickler for short discourses.

In unanimously appointing the Rev. William Robertson, of Chesterfield, to the Moderatorship, the Synod paid a graceful and deserved tribute to long and faithful service in the work of the Gospel and to unobtrusive merit.

The reports of the various standing committees were this year specially good. There is nothing invidious in making special reference to that submitted by the Convener of the Committee on the State of Religion, since, both publicly and privately, it was the theme of favourable remark. It was calm, earnest, faithful, and thoroughly Presbyterian in tone and sentiment, supplying a strong incentive to all who heard it to return to their respective spheres of labour in a spirit of renewed consecration to work for the salvation of souls, the edifying of the body of Christ, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit. It is to be hoped that the Convener will accede to the generally expressed wish for its publication. Its extensive circulation would be productive of great good.

The Sabbath School report was also one of great excellence. It recorded gratifying progress in this most important department of church work. The recommendations intended to render the Christian training of the young more efficient commended themselves at once to the Synod.

A subject that receives usually but scant attention was earnestly and ably discussed at the late meeting—the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. The brethren who so efficiently spoke on the subject could do so all the more gracefully as the most cynically-disposed individual could not insinuate that a personal motive lurked behind their advocacy of a scheme that has not, up to the present, received anything like adequate support. The condensed but vigorous plea presented by Dr. McDonald was felt to be peculiarly appropriate.

Excellent reports on the Bible in Public Schools, Sabbath Observance, and Temperance were also presented. The selections from Scripture recently sanctioned by the Minister of Education, and authorized by the Lieutenant-Governor, were highly commended, and gratitude was expressed that such an advance had resulted from the agitation so long maintained. A number, while expressing satisfaction with the result achieved, hoped for a further advance. The legislation obtained for the restriction of Sabbath desecration was cordially acknowledged, the labours of Messrs. John Charlton, M.P., and A. F. Wood, M.P.P., coming in for grateful recognition. The Sunday newspaper received vigorous and unsparing condemnation. The progress of the Temperance cause during the year was recognized as a matter for devout thankfulness, and the recommendations to aid in the passage and enforcement of the Canada Temperance Act were heartily accepted.

The field day of the Synod was the closing one. The discussion of Mr. Ball's overture on French Evangelization was very able. The leading combatants did not allow excited feelings to overmaster them. Mr. Ball presented his report with his accustomed ability and graceful fluency, and, if he failed to establish his position, he satisfied most who heard him that he was influenced by no spirit of hostility to the work of French Evangelization. Mr. Warden made an excellent defence and gave satisfactory explanations on the points raised in the course of discussion, while