

PRESBYTERIAN

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 1886.

LAST week Chicago furnished a telling illustration of the kind of citizens that are made by socialism and infidelity. The men who raised the riots there and threw the shell among the police, taking the lives of several and maiming others for life, are, of course, genuine specimens of the European socialistic infidel. One of them gave a reporter this charming account of himself:

The man said he could not understand why it is that men could not do as they think best. He had come to this country because the agent who had told him to emigrate had promised he would come to a free country. He had come here with the idea that this country was a free one in which a man could do what he pleased. Now he had found out that the police in this country were just as bad as those in Europe, and protected the property of the rich, while the workmen wanted to destroy because they wanted to compel the rich to become their equals. Therefore he hated the American police just as much as he did the officers in Europe, and thought it just to kill them and their spies.

There is a charming simplicity about this little narrative. His idea of a free country was to do what he pleased. If he pleased to kill a few officers of the police good and well, nobody had any right to object. One of the leaders, on being asked if he favoured the killing of police with dynamite, gave this candid reply:

"That all depends on circumstances, if you have an enemy you must kill him. I look upon the police as the representatives of the capitalists. I am opposed to the present laws. I consider them inimical to the furtherance of social growth."

This worthy puts two points of his creed very plainly. He is "opposed to all law," and "if you have an enemy you must kill him." And yet there are easy-going people who tell you that infidelity is not in the least degree dangerous to society. There are others who think that a man may have ample regard for his neighbour and none for his Creator. Chicago threw a fierce light on these theories last week. There is probably more and fiercer light to follow.

AN EXPLANATION NEEDED.

ON the 14th of April Mr. Ferguson, M P for Leeds, while replying to a speech of Mr. M. C. Cameron on Indian affairs, according to the "Hansard" report, made the following insinuation in regard to the Rev. James Robertson, Superintendent of Missions in the North-West:

The hon. gentleman made reference to the statements that appeared in the newspapers of a Rev. Mr. Robertson. I happen to know something about Rev. Mr. Robertson, which I do not care to disclose or discuss here, and which, to my mind, does not add much to the weight of his statements. I am not going any further on that subject.

Immediately afterwards Mr. Fairbank rose in his place, and said:

I do not rise for the purpose of prolonging the debate, which has already been amply handled on this side of the House, but I rise to call attention to a very improper remark made by an hon. gentleman opposite. He has spoken in reference to the Rev. Mr. Robertson, a gentleman with whom I happen to have a slight acquaintance, having met him in the discharge of his duties in that country, having listened to his preaching, and knowing him very well by reputation. When an hon. member in this House stands up in his place and makes a remark like this: I know something of the Rev. Mr. Robertson which I am not going to refer to here, I submit that that gentleman has either said too much or not enough.

Mr. Charlton said:

I merely rise to call attention to a charge made by the hon. gentleman for Leeds (Mr. Ferguson) against a very respectable and highly esteemed clergyman of the Presbyterian Church. If these insinuations made by the hon. gentleman meant anything, he should have come further, for, as the hon. gentleman for Lambton says, either he said too much or too little. I think it is due to the Rev. Mr. Robertson, and due to this House, that the hon. member for Leeds should specify what the charges are that he insinuated against that gentleman. There is one feature of that gentleman's character that, I presume, would not commend itself to the hon. member for Leeds. He is, I believe, a Liberal, and has been for many years. Sir, the Rev. Mr. Robertson is a gentleman of the highest respectability. I have known him for over twenty years, have known him intimately. His position in the Church is a high one, he has for many years been in charge of the Presbyterian Missions in the North-West, and in discharging those duties he has proved himself to be an efficient and an able man. It is to be regretted that such insinuations should be made against that gentleman, insinuations that leave us to imagine almost anything we please with regard to him. I claim on behalf of the

reverend gentleman that it is due to this House, to him, and to the country, that we should know what the charges are against him—whether he has been a thief or a liar; whatever the charge may be, let the hon. member from Leeds tell us what it is.

Mr. Watson, the representative of a Manitoba constituency, added:

I would not have spoken at this hour were it not for an insinuation that has been made on the other side of the House against the Rev. James Robertson, and also the insinuation made by the Minister of Public Works in reference to the Rev. John McDougall. Now, I consider that if there are two gentlemen in the North-West who have rendered a service to this country in civilizing the Indians, it is those two gentlemen. I was surprised to hear hon. gentlemen opposite slander them to-night. The Rev. Mr. Robertson I have known for the last ten years, and I think he is a man who is above reproach. He did not go to the North-West on the same mission as did the hon. member for Leeds, who has been slandering him; he did not go to the North-West for the purpose of having *bona fide* settlers' parents cancelled by his Government influence; but the Rev. Mr. Robertson went to the North-West for the purpose of doing good to the white settlers and the Indians.

Mr. Ferguson made no reply to the challenges of Messrs. Fairbank, Charlton and Watson. On seeing the report we asked Mr. Ferguson to make specific charges, or withdraw his insinuations and apologize. Nearly a month has passed, and so far as we have seen he has done neither the one nor the other. We told Mr. Ferguson that the matter was not one between him and Mr. Robertson, but between him and the Presbyterian Church of Canada, whose servant Mr. Robertson is. Mr. Ferguson now stands before the people of Canada as a Member of Parliament who uses his privileges to stab by insinuation the reputation of a missionary of this Church, and who when called upon to make specific charges or withdraw his insinuation, is too cowardly to do the one or the other. We direct the attention of the Christian people of Leeds, especially the Presbyterians, to the conduct of their representative. This is not a question of party politics. No political party is called upon to endorse Mr. Ferguson's conduct.

SYNODICAL CONFERENCES.

ALTHOUGH there was a very fair attendance, both of ministers and elders, at the meeting of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, held in Galt last week, there is still room for the complaint that the Synod does not appear to be the most popular and attractive of Presbyterian Church Courts. In the nature of the case it can scarcely be otherwise. The practical work of the Church is done by Presbyteries and the General Assembly. Whatever business arising out of memorials and complaints appealed from Presbyterial decisions reaches the Synod, in a majority of cases, finds its way ultimately to the Supreme Court of the Church. It was at one time thought that Synods would dispose of a number of such cases, and thereby save precious time in the General Assembly. Such expectations have not been exactly fulfilled. It was also thought that Synods would afford greater opportunities for the consideration of those subjects which affect the vital interests of the Church, such as the State of Religion, Sabbath Schools, Evangelistic Work and cognate themes, which the presence of necessary business in the Assembly to some extent hinders. This hope likewise has not been as yet satisfactorily realized.

Several had the impression that this defect might be remedied by the institution of the Synodical Conference. For several years the experiment has been tried with, in most respects, very satisfactory results. Conferences at their best, however, have not secured anything like a full attendance of members of Synod, a state of things not altogether incapable of explanation. Members have often to decide between conflicting claims of duty. The time occupied in Conference and Synod makes a considerable inroad on that at a minister's disposal. It absorbs the better part of one week, and leaves little opportunity for necessary pulpit preparation. Those who in a month later have to attend the General Assembly consider that the time they are called upon to devote to the general business of the Church is very considerable, and some for that reason feel themselves justified in omitting attendance on the Subordinate Court.

The general impression of all who have been present at these Synodical Conferences appears to be that they are especially interesting and profitable. This certainly was the uniform opinion of those who were present at the recent meeting in Galt. The number of residents in the town who attended the evening meetings especially was an evidence that deep interest

was taken in the subjects selected for consideration, and in the manner in which they were discussed. It was also felt, and freely expressed, that they had a stimulating influence on the ministers and elders present. The topics selected for this year's Conference were all of them of a most practical character, and the manner and spirit in which they were treated by the various speakers by whom they were introduced were all that could be desired, and though free voice was given to differences of opinion, there was nothing to mar the harmony, or to lessen the beneficial and elevating influence they were so well fitted to produce.

The success attending these Conferences, and the desire to make them still more effective and profitable has prompted an effort to make them an integral part of the Synod itself. The plea in favour of this advance is by no means weak. It would provide a welcome and refreshing change from the unbroken continuance of routine work, and would afford to the residents of the place where the meetings are held greater occasions of profit than discussions of overtures relating to the internal economy of the Church and unfinished business from a former sederunt.

At all events, the Synod of Toronto and Kingston has resolved to try the experiment next year. The Synod is to meet on Monday instead of Tuesday and the evenings are to be devoted to conference on subjects of directly spiritual import. Those living at great distances from the place appointed for the next year's meeting do not take kindly to the change, for the reason that they find it impossible to be present at the opening session. When the Synod meets at the extreme of either the eastern or western boundary, this difficulty will necessarily be felt, but in general the meetings are held more centrally and easily accessible to all.

One thing very noticeable in these Conferences is that their main object is designed for the spiritual well-being and prosperity of the Church. The manifest aim of each speaker was how best to obtain spiritual quickening and how to discover the fittest methods of promoting Christian work, promoting the knowledge of the Saviour, exalting religious feeling, deepening reverence for divine things, extending the conquests of the Cross and advancing the glory of God.

AN ANTIDOTE TO ANARCHY.

RECENT Socialistic atrocities in Chicago and elsewhere teach important lessons demanding serious attention. The most obvious is one that is easily learned and needs no insistence. The maintenance of law and order, the protection of life and property from murderous assault and destructive violence, is imperative. No less essential is it to maintain the inalienable right of all citizens, whether millionaire or poorest labourer, to free action, as long as such action is within the sanction of the law.

There is another lesson no less apparent and no less imperative, though not so generally recognized as it ought to be, that when summary justice is meted out to the anarchist criminal, the law vindicated and order restored, the responsibility of society to these misguided and perverse classes does not end. Why is it that in such centres as Chicago and Milwaukee of all other places these fatal riots should break out so destructively? True, the great body of the rioters were from congested labour centres of the European Continent, from Polish provinces and from crowded German cities and towns. These down-trodden people were not trained to freedom, and their spiritual natures were uncared for. Firmness in dealing with this unassimilated element of the American population was too long deferred. When the logical result of long neglect had to be promptly met, action was, as it behooved to be, sharp, direct and decisive.

The great Earl of Shaftesbury, who understood both the nature of the London proletariat and what they most required, called earnest attention to the danger that would inevitably threaten society if the denizens of the London slums were allowed to wallow in their pest-breeding quarters in a moral and spiritual degradation unsurpassed by heathens anywhere. His warnings are being verified. What examples have the people of this continent been setting before these anarchic immigrants in whose hearts hate and impotent fury have been rankling? They have been loud in the praises of the freedom the United States afford to all who land on their shores. These misguided Socialists, fresh from European restraints, have abused that freedom, and for years