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The Canada Presbyterian.

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Presbyterian Lesson Scheme for 1890.

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A PRIEST in Quebec was fined \$200 the other day for using undue influence to prevent one of his parishioners from getting a license to sell liquor. That is one kind of priestly influence that many Protestants would not seriously object to. The priest has appealed and we hope his appeal will be successful.

IN one of our contributions last week the writer said of Spurgeon that in the early years of his ministry "the church people disliked him; the literati ridiculed him; hypocrites of all kinds hated him; formalists feared him." The types said journalists feared him. The types should have known that journalists never fear any preacher.

IT is said that when the great Centennial Exposition was being held in Philadelphia every man in the American Union discovered he had a cousin or relation of some kind in that city. A few Canadians also discovered that they had friends in Philadelphia. It will soon be time for us to hunt up our friends in Chicago. The next world's fair will be held in that city.

THE Presbyterian Ministers' Association of Chicago discussed Home Rule at their last meeting. Just what connection there is between Home Rule in Ireland and a Presbyterian minister's work in Chicago we fail to see, but no doubt it is all right. Everybody seems anxious to take a hand in the government of Ireland. If we Canadians don't make less fuss about our family grievances we may soon hear of associations in Australia and New Zealand discussing the best way to govern Canada.

THE Christian-at-Work says:

In reply to a note in these columns the CANADA PRESBYTERIAN says Canada has a law against bigamy, and that is sufficient to reach Mormon polygamy. We certainly hope it is.

Well, if it is not, Parliament is passing a law now that can reach bigamy, trigamy, polygamy or any other unlawful married condition. It reaches the persons who marry too much and the persons that solemnized the marriages. In fact it is a good law, apparently drawn with great skill by our Minister of Justice and the Mormon who can drive a coach and four through it will need to have all his wits about him and a good deal of money.

DR. JOHN HALL attended a meeting in his son's church in Chicago not long ago. One of the speakers remarked that young Mr. Hall is a chip of the old block. The doctor with his usual wisdom and candour replied that it made no difference what block the young man was of if his congregation did not stand by him and help him in his work. There is a seedling truth there that might easily be expanded into a good article or speech. A young minister might be descended from Abraham, or Paul, or John Knox, or Chalmers, but if his lot were cast among a lot of unprogressive, quarrelsome, cranky people his family connection would do him little good. Some congregations could use up Dr. John Hall's son just as fast as the son of an ordinary man.

MR. JOHN CHARLTON has an admirable Sabbath Observance bill before the Commons which he introduced with all his old time energy and ability. It strikes at the root of many kinds of Sabbath desecration and should have the support of every patriotic member of the House. We shall soon see whether all the recent defenders of the Protestant religion are equally ready to defend the sanctity of the Protestant Sabbath. The Sabbath is the corner stone—or at least one of the corner stones of Protestantism and we hope the country will be spared any such humiliating spectacle as that of public men professing to defend the superstructure while they try to kick away the foundation. The testing time has come soon and in a way that few people expected.

WHAT strange inconsistencies even the best of men stumble into when they engage keenly in controversy. One of the Presbyterian journals across the line—the strongest if not the wisest advocate of Revision—is greatly exercised because so many ministers without pulpits—professors and probationers—are taking a prominent part against Revision. The journal thinks the discussion should be confined mainly to ministers who are pastors. And yet the editor of that journal is a minister who gives nearly all his time to editorial work, and the proprietor a minister who has given his life mainly to business! Both are taking a prominent part in favour of Revision. There is nothing like controversy for blinding people and making them do unconsciously the most absurdly inconsistent things. It would not be hard to point to a score of men in Canada at this moment who occupy positions just as peculiar as the position of the editor and publisher who say pastors alone should take part in the Revision movement, and then take a prominent part themselves.

THE Christian Guardian has this to say of clerical proselyters:—

There are some pastors, mostly of the "curate" class, who are great proselyters. They show far more zeal to induce members of other churches to leave their own church and join that of the proselyters, than to convert sinners from the error of their way. Not long ago, one of these gentlemen in this city sent round an appeal to the young people of other churches to join the choir of his church, holding out glowing advantages of instruction in music, etc., to those who would accept the offer. All this seems to us a very small business. It is neither courteous nor right for the minister of one denomination to ask people who are connected with another Christian church to forsake it and come to his church. It is certainly not according to the Golden Rule. The proselyter is generally a man who needs to be taught some lessons in Christian manhood and courtesy himself.

These are true and manly words and we hope they will be laid to heart by those Methodist preachers who allow their zeal to overcome their professional honour, especially when they are carrying on special services. A higher sense of professional honour would, on the part of some ministers of the "curate" and other classes, do more to bring about and maintain a friendly feeling among the denominations than any number of union conferences.

THE Board of Home Missions of the American Presbyterian Church have elected the Rev. Duncan J. MacMillan—good Scotch name—to the Secretaryship of that body. The *Interior* nominated Mr. McMillan for the position and has this to say of the way in which he began his work in the west:—

Dr. McMillan went out to Utah ten or twelve years ago as a self-sustaining missionary. He believed in getting at the Mormon children. In the course of his preaching he was warned to leave the country, and was advised by his friends that he would be killed. Among his other theological accomplishments he is a superb shot, either with the pistol or rifle. There is only one man in the Presbyterian Church who outranks him in 45-70 piety—plain sights, at 200 yards, and that is the editor of the *Interior* who jumped two deer at once, one day last fall, and got them both on the full bound. MacMillan can't beat that. But this is a digression. Mac's handiness with the pistol was well known among the people—and he made up his mind that when he was shot he would not be hit in the back. So he went to fill his appointment. A leading Mormon sat three or four benches back of the preacher's stand; and when the young preacher ascended the pulpit, the mob began to hoot outside, and he took out his revolver, laid it on the open Bible, and notified the Mormon that if there was any disturbance he would call him first. After that the missionary was allowed to preach free grace and the love of God without opposition.

We have heard some fairly good reports about the rough work done by some of our own pioneer preachers in the good old times but nothing quite up to the foregoing. If any Canadian preacher can parallel, or equal brother McMillan's experiences, his story will find a ready place in these columns.

IT is not usual for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN to be called upon to act as referee in matters of amusement. If dense ignorance of sporting matters generally, and of indoor games of chance in particular, could by any possibility be considered as a qualification, then there might be some excuse for offering an opinion. It seems that in a certain ancient historic city in the East there is a Progressive Whist Club, whose members play for prizes. If we understand the statements of correspondents—for more than one has written on the subject—there is also in the same city a Curling Club, whose members also compete for certain prizes. What seems to be the perplexing thing to our eastern friends is the moral principle involved in the games of these respective clubs. Leaving out of sight for the moment the element of chance, which is generally believed to be inseparable from card-playing, and the temptation to encourage the gambling spirit it is supposed to offer,—to make the cases parallel, the prizes must be competed for fairly, and everything connected with the games must be open and above board. The one thing to be discouraged is the gambling practice. Whether at cards or curling, in the Stock Exchange, or church social, gambling is evil, and only evil, and those who encourage it incur responsibility.

THE Revisionists over the way are beginning to find that a man's worst foes are often those of his own household. A few reckless advocates of revision by their wild utterances may easily drive a large number of moderate revisionists and neutral men over to the side of the antis. 'Twas ever thus. The fools and fanatics that cling to every cause are far more dangerous than the avowed opponents of the cause. One or two reckless fanatics can do a temperance organization far more real injury than all the liquor dealers in the neighbourhood. One or two chronic troublers in a congregation can injure it more in a month than all the infidels in the neighbourhood can hurt it in a year. Two or three firebrands who want to burn everybody who does not belong to their own denomination can do the denomination a thousand fold more injury than all the other denominations combined could do even if they were wicked enough to try. Advocates of organic union conveniently forget that all the denominations and all the congregations suffer far more from within than from without. Strange that any minister who has suffered, as all ministers have, much more from lack of co-operation or active opposition in his own congregation, should look upon organic union as a remedy for almost every ill. Nine-tenths of the pastors in Canada have been hindered much more by insiders than by outsiders. Would organic union remedy that?

CONGREGATIONAL PROSPERITY.

IT is evident from the general tenor of the reports submitted at the annual congregational meetings throughout the Church that a calm and steady progress is being maintained. There is an increase in the reported membership. From changes of residence constantly taking place, congregations both gain and lose. In the larger centres congregations are receiving accessions from less populous districts, so that in these latter it is no sign of decay nor an evidence of waning fidelity if certain congregations are barely holding their own, or even suffering a slight numerical decrease. In almost all cases there have not only been accessions to membership by certificate, but encouraging numbers are reported as joining the fellowship of the Church on profession of their faith. In the matter of contributions also a gratifying general increase is also reported. The revival of interest in Foreign Missions and a deepening sense of responsibility are evidenced in the increased liberality in providing means for the maintenance and extension of this essential department of Christian endeavour. So far as a cursory view affords, the increase of contributions for Foreign Missions has not been at the expense of other and no less important branches of Christian work. A higher tide of liberality has been reached in providing means for the entire work of the Church. It is gratifying also to observe that a number of congregations have thoughtfully taken into account the temporal well-being of their pastors, and have cheerfully voted an increase to salaries, by no means exorbitant. Good work will not be less efficiently done because it is handsomely and generously recognized.

From the same sources of information it is apparent that Christian work in the various congregations is every year becoming more general and is being better systematized. This seems to be the