

ably furnished, the total cost of which has been already paid. The St. John Presbyterian Church has erected a spacious and elegant dwelling for their minister, which, when fully furnished, will be one of the most comfortable manses in connexion with our body. Movements in the right direction are also contemplated in other churches, but all the churches in the city of St. John are at present suffering severely from the general stagnation of trade, and especially from the almost entire suspension of shipbuilding, in which branch of industry many of our people are engaged. In many parts of the country Presbyterianism has suffered much, and still suffers from the inroads of other denominations. Small groups of Presbyterians found themselves isolated and apparently neglected. Without being convinced that other denominations preached a purer gospel or possessed an organization equally in accordance with the word of God, they yielded to the force of apparent necessity and they and their posterity are lost to Presbyterianism. We indulge in no reflection upon those who, as best they could, preached to our neglected co-religionists the word of life. We regard their having done so rather as a kindness. But we deplore the necessity that led in many instances at least to the association of our people with churches whose doctrine and polity they must have received with many reservations.

CAUSES OF WEAKNESS.

Presbyterianism was seriously injured also in another way. There arose in some instances, in neglected districts, men who entertained too high an estimate of their own abilities to allow them to rest satisfied in merely reading to their hearers the carefully prepared sermons of wise and good men. These men must *preach*; and not satisfied with the position of lay preachers, they aspired to the full standing of christian ministers without any suitable preliminary training. In the Presbyterian church the ambition of such men could not be gratified. In other denominations they were freely offered that which they were denied in their own. If by the study of the Shorter Catechism they had formed some acquaintance

with Systematic Theology and possessed a measure of the gift of utterance, they found no difficulty in stepping into the ministry in connexion with a neighbouring denomination. They were thereupon represented to their late co-religionists as men of extraordinary powers, who had grace given them to emerge out of the darkness of their former faith to the clearer light of their new found associates. The effect of such a policy upon a neglected and ill-trained Presbyterian population would naturally be very great, and coupled with the temptation of regular services in the new connexion, was sufficient, in some instances at least, to induce large numbers to forsake the faith of their fathers.

The consequence is, that in many parts of the country numbers have left us; and in localities in which thirty years ago we had many adherents we have now but very few—these few consisting strangely enough of the *best* and the *worst* of our former adherents. The best remain with us because they believed the scriptural character of our doctrines and church order, and the worst, regarding the name of Presbyterianism as a kind of patronymic, have continued to wear it as they do their surnames.

HOPEFUL PROSPECTS.

In New Brunswick however, as elsewhere, Presbyterianism has lost no ground wherever it has had a fair trial. It were too much to expect that our people, uncared for and uninstructed in the grounds of their faith, should hold out against the various influences brought to bear upon them.—Wherever labour has been expended the fruit is abundant. In the city of St. John the *one* church of thirty years ago has become six, and a seventh will soon be organized. Of these, four are in our own connexion, and they will bear comparison in strength, order, intelligence, morality and liberality with the churches of any other denomination. Throughout the whole province our churches are steadily increasing, and the scattered fragments will soon, by the help of God, be carefully gathered and grouped together throughout the length and breadth of the country. In our past history there is much to instruct us, and in