

THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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WE have a word to say about Sunday Schools and Sunday School Conventions. A correspondent has furnished us with a synopsis of the proceedings of the convention lately held at St. Catherines, Ontario. As for the rest, we ourselves

witnessed what was said and done at the previous four held in Canada; and the fact of attendance at them shows that there was no prepossession against them. A fair trial was accorded them, so that any remarks we offer are to be attributed neither to ignorance nor prejudice. The convictions now to be expressed are the result of calm observation and earnest reflection.

In the first place we object to the spirit of arrogance, if we may be allowed the term, which has characterized the self-elected and self-constituted champions of the Sunday School at these conventions. They assume to represent the cause at large, as if they were the only workers in this enterprise, overlooking the fact that wherever in these provinces there is a Protestant congregation there is also a Sunday school, and some congregations have several schools in connection with them. Now the Church of England in Canada has not been represented in these conventions, and our own church barely so; and although a few ministers and laymen of the Canada Presbyterian Church have countenanced them, yet that church as a whole has taken very little interest in them. In these circumstances, for the few workers in the Sunday school cause who attend these conventions to affect to monopolize all the skill and all the zeal in the interests of the religious instruction of the young, as they have been accustomed to do, reminds one very forcibly of the "three tailors of Tooley Street." We have no objection that individual workers in the cause

shall meet annually to compare notes, and stimulate each other; but we do object to the tone of their deliverances, which have often reflected upon those who did not recognize this voluntary association as if they deserved the fate of Meroz as enemies of Sunday schools.

We object also to one at least of the functions they set themselves, that is, of collecting Sunday school statistics. It is presumed that every Christian denomination in the land collects annually statistics of its own Sunday schools, so that if these conventions are desirous of knowing how many schools there are in the land, and how many teachers, and what progress is making in the cause, it would be very easy for them to apply to the conveners of such statistical committees in each denomination, whose names are readily accessible. But this does not suit the ambitious views of the convention, which wishes to obtain a recognition for itself by addressing every Sunday school directly, and then inferring that all that report to it acknowledge its legitimacy to legislate on Sunday school questions; and by setting forth a certain number of schools belonging to different denominations, without hinting that there are others not reported, it seems as if they would force those denominations who for the most part deny the right of any self-constituted body to decide grave questions relative to the religious instruction of the young, to make complete returns to the convention in order to keep their true position in the eyes of the public, and so it could assume to speak in the name of all Sunday schools in the country.

We object also to the manner of parading before these conventions gentlemen invited from the United States. Personally such men as Pardee, Bolton and Duryea are admirable gentlemen, good men and true, as well as great enthusiasts in regard to the highest interests of the young; but it is