

The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, May 14, 1896.

The Presbytery of New York and the Licensing of Students.

THE last General Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church enjoined the Presbytery of New York "not to receive under its care for licensure students who are pursuing or purpose to pursue their studies in theological seminaries respecting whose teaching the General Assembly disavows responsibility." At a recent meeting of the Presbytery a Committee on the Minutes of Assembly reported that in so doing the "Assembly exceeds its constitutional powers and infringes upon the inherent rights of the Presbytery which are specially reserved to it by the constitution." After lengthened debate the Presbytery declined to adopt this report and adopted instead a motion made by Mr. Dr. John Hall, assuring the Assembly of the Presbytery's loyalty to the standards of the Church in the reception of ministers from other Presbyteries and in the licensing of students' irrespective of any question of where they have been trained. It is not certain that this will end the matter or satisfy the majority of the Church, but it seems a little difficult in these days when students are disposed to travel far afield in search of knowledge to apply any other principle. The Assembly's action was intended no doubt to prevent students from attending Union Seminary, but it would logically exclude all those who have taken post-graduate courses in Edinburgh, Oxford, or in German Universities, however orthodox they might be. As a blow at Union Seminary it seems to have proved a failure as the number of students in attendance this session is stated to have been larger than ever before.

Foreign Mission Funds.

We publish this week another appeal from the Foreign Mission Committee. It appears that now when the books are closed the Fund is \$8,784.81 in arrears. The appeal is addressed to ministers and sessions, and states that if the congregations are made acquainted with the situation, and a contribution, however small, received from each, the whole amount will be provided for in time to report to the General Assembly. No doubt ministers and sessions often shrink from appeals of this kind, and yet what can the Committee do but keep the Church acquainted with her own work. The missionaries are in the field—the work is growing and more laborers are urgently needed. It is an honest debt and must be paid. To carry a deficit into next year means perplexity and injury to a cause whose importance cannot be exaggerated, and which we believe lies near the heart of very many in our Church. The Committee asks that on Sabbath the 24th or 31st May a collection be taken for this purpose. We understand both the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds have a surplus, which is satisfactory. If this appeal is

generally responded to and especially if Sabbath School and Young People's Societies take an interest this deficit will be extinguished to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The Schemes of the Church.

In a neatly printed report of the Presbytery of London, Ont., the following pithy, pertinent, passages appear regarding the Schemes of the church:—

It is the duty of all members of the church to contribute according to ability to the Schemes of the Church, and the Presbytery recommends that in doing so, conscientious regard should be had to the requirements of all the Schemes.

The Presbytery further recommends that a Mission Committee or Board of Missions be appointed in every congregation, consisting of the Session with other members of the congregation whose duty it would be to aid in awakening and keeping up interest in mission work, and to allocate the year's contributions to the several Schemes.

The Presbytery recommends the adoption of the envelope system in collecting for the Schemes, and these collections should be made weekly or monthly—certainly not seldomer than quarterly. The envelopes may be so prepared as to give each contributor the privilege of indicating what proportion of his offering he wishes to be devoted to each Scheme, if he so desires.

The Province Of The Pulpit.

Too often is the pulpit the subject of intolerable criticism, and in the thoughts to be here expressed there is no desire to act the part of the candid critic, but rather to draw a lesson from some fact of recent occurrence that may serve as a warning to preachers. In a city congregation, not connected to the Presbyterian church, it is the practice to select subjects for the evening discourse with the obvious aim of "drawing a crowd." Among the members were a family of earnest Christians who went to church to worship God and to hear the Gospel preached. To them it became unendurable to have to listen one evening to a sermon on the "New Woman," another evening on "Toronto the Good," another, again, on "Toronto the Bad," and so on *ad infinitum*, and *ad nauseam* too. Finally it became a question of conscience whether membership could be continued in that congregation, and a severance took place. The family attended a church in a different denomination, viz: the Baptist, and now are about to join that body. The case is not by any means an isolated one, and it illustrates both the tendency in certain quarters to divert the pulpit from its primary object, to hanker after sensationalism, to push to the verge of worldliness in order to tickle the curious and fill the pews. Every one has heard of the minister who announced that on the following Sabbath he would give a "Quintologue" and when the time came explained that a "Quintologue" meant a sermon with five divisions a mild ruse in comparison with the means too often made use of now-a-days to attract attention. The old minister preached a Gospel sermon even if it had been constructed under five heads, but many of the "popular subjects" announced for evening addresses have scarcely a religious basis to stand upon. No thoughtful observer of the tendency of the times can fail to see and to note with regret the shallow fluency that too often does duty for substantial thought and forcible expression of truth; and the disastrous departure from an exposition of evangelical truth to a superficial discussion of moral or historical subjects or for that matter