

lists filled, although that is very essential, but by sending communications of interest, original papers, either on religious or other topics suited for our pages, written in as pleasing a style as possible, not *dreich*, we have not much space at command if we are to give variety. Sabbath school superintendents and teachers might surely write occasionally on their own department: the backwoodsman might give his experiences of a bush life: the city man of his labours among the poor: the conveners of the various schemes might, now and then, give some account of what difficulties or encouragements they meet with in their labours. And if, with one heart and mind, we determine to make *The Presbyterian* what it should be, there is little doubt we shall succeed.

A PROPER system for registering births, marriages, and deaths, is much wanted in the Province. We are astonished that those on whom the burden is thrown, should have so long submitted in silence, to perform onerous duties for which they receive no remuneration, and the non-fulfilment, or negligent performance of which renders them liable in heavy penalties. All clergymen or priests are compelled by statute to keep registers of the baptisms and marriages at which they have officiated, and of the funerals at which they have attended in their official capacity. In Lower Canada, these registers and duplicates must be paid for out of the Church funds, and considerable trouble has to be incurred to have them authenticated by the Judge of the Superior Court. In Upper Canada, no provision is made for more than one register, which must be sent at the beginning of each year to the officer pointed out by the act. In Lower Canada the clergyman is bound to give a copy of any entry in the register to any one demanding it, *without fee*, and for each and every infraction of the statute, he is liable to a penalty of from eight to eighty dollars, besides running the risk of having an action of damages brought against him. In Upper Canada, neglect or refusal to comply with the requirements of the act is a misdemeanour, and punishable as such.

Passing over the injustice of throwing upon a class of men, who are not, in general, too well paid, duties and obligations which they have no right to be called upon to perform at all, far less to do so gratuitously, we would ask seriously what possible good can be derived from returns which

must, of necessity, be of a most imperfect character. For observe, it is not the births which are to be registered, but the baptisms. True, there is a provision made for registering births in Upper Canada, but that is only where there is no clergyman resident within reasonable distance of a settlement. If a clergyman is to be found within such reasonable distance, it would seem as if the birth need not be registered, but only the baptism, which, however, may never take place! Again, it is not the deaths but the funerals which are to be registered, and of course, no clergyman can be bound to record a funeral at which he has not officiated. It appears as if our legislators thought it would not look well to be without a system of registration, since other countries had one; but, overcome by the effort of legislative wisdom, they could go no further, and did not seem to know that the information wanted must be full and complete, to be of the slightest use. The value of a proper system will point out in another article. The defects of the present one are patent to all. Take up the census, and glance at the names of the various religious bodies, and it will be apparent to the most unreflecting, that if the returns are made only in cases in which the services of ministers of religion are called in, they must be quite fallacious. Yet on these we must depend for our vital statistics. Is it not the fact, that many young, middle aged and old men are baptised, whose parents were Baptists? Does their birth in the return date from their baptism? How are the children of those of *no religion* registered? Have the Mennonites and Tunkers (whatever these names may mean) any form of baptism? Apply similar questions to the other two points on which information is supposed to be obtained, and no one will have any hesitation in making up his mind, that not only are the requirements of the present registration law an injustice, but that its results are a farce.

A Society for the sanctification of the Lord's Day has been lately formed at Geneva, in Switzerland, on a basis which may be worth consideration by the friends of the Sabbath here. It is an endeavour to extend the organization beyond those who regard the sanctification of the Sabbath in its highest aspect, and to include in it those who look at it as a merely temporal benefit. In pursuance of this object the Committee determined to address them