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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1885.

AN appeal from the Joint Conveners of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Scheme appears in another column to which our readers' attention is specially directed. Every intelligent member of the Presbyterian Church admits the importance of making some provision for those who have given their best energies and the best years of their lives to the work of the Gospel ministry. The provision hitherto made has been wholly inadequate. The poor income enjoyed by the average minister was barely sufficient to meet recurring wants, and only in exceptional instances could he make any provision for declining days. Business has no doubt been less remunerative during the past than in previous years, but to diminish the pittance on which our aged and infirm ministers depend is what no one can complacently desire. There is sufficient right feeling and sufficient means in the Church to enable the Conveners to report to the Assembly that their most reasonable expectations have not been disappointed.

THE Synod of Montreal and Ottawa had a pleasant and profitable meeting at Cornwall last week. The good people there were unremitting and successful in their efforts to render the visit to the fine old town as agreeable as possible. The members carry away pleasant reminiscences of the Cornwall meeting. Much good and important work may be expected from the deliberations of the brethren of the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa. Besides discussing various questions that came up at the other Synods, in addition to the able presentation of the work done by the French Evangelization Board by the Chairman and Secretary, the report presented by the Rev. Professor Scrimger, on Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec, and the discussion that ensued, ought to receive serious attention. It was decidedly refreshing to hear outspoken words on the practice of Protestant parents sending their children to be educated in Roman Catholic institutions. It is high time that this matter received the consideration it deserves.

WE see no good purpose that can be served by sending the overture ament work among Roman Catholics that came before the Presbytery of Toronto last week to the General Assembly. If anybody wishes to engage in that kind of work now he is at perfect liberty to do so. If it is proposed to add another scheme to our church work, the Assembly will nip the proposal in the bud. We have quite as many schemes now as the Church is willing to support. To add another while some of those already in existence are suffering from a want of funds would be the height of folly. We have our special work among the Catholics of Quebec, and the Church is not in a position to undertake any further work of that kind at present. Let us do all in our power to strengthen the hands of the French Evangelization Committee and make that work as successful as possible before starting a scheme that might be a rival if not a hindrance to the one already in existence. To say that work might be done in this new field is to say nothing to the point. A dozen different kinds of work might be attempted; but the Church must select the most pressing, and

certainly the work already undertaken in Quebec is very much more pressing than that which has not been undertaken in Ontario. If we were even beginning the work now Quebec would have stronger claims than Ontario.

TORONTO was favoured last week with a visit from the prince of living lecturers—John B. Gough. Time and incessant labour have made some changes in his appearance. The bushy-black hair and whiskers of other days have become white; his voice is not quite so flexible as it once was, but Gough is still Gough. In his own line he is unapproached and unapproachable. Eclipse is first and there is no second. He has kept his hold on the public longer than any living man, and he draws as well as he ever did. Of course, no report ever does him justice. You might as well try to report a thunderstorm. Even if the words were all taken down they would convey no idea of the impression made. Doubtless, one reason why Gough has kept his hold on the public so long is that in all his lectures and in every part of each lecture he teaches most important lessons. Behind his most ludicrous anecdote, or his finest description, or his most side-splitting mimicry, there is always a noble lesson of some kind. He is a true man, and teaches a good moral with great power. One reason why you are sorry when the two hours are over, instead of glad at the end of one, as you usually feel when anybody else lectures, is because Gough introduces a never-ending variety. He reasons, describes, paints, appeals, makes you laugh and weep, appeals to your conscience and keeps changing from one thing to another so often that you never know until the two hours are up. The bane of public speaking is monotony. Humdrum is a curse.

THE world has never seen nobler efforts made by a statesman than those made by the Premier of England during the past few weeks to preserve the peace of Europe, and, at the same time, keep the honour of England untarnished. His policy was well condensed in the last sentence of the peroration of his great speech when he asked for fifty-five millions to prosecute the war:

I believe that, with one heart and one soul, and one purpose only, while reserving the absolute liberty of judging the conduct of the Government and visiting them with its consequences, the House will go forward to perform and meet the demands of justice and the calls of honour, and will, subject only to justice and to honour, labour for the purposes of peace.

The demands of justice must be met and the calls of honour obeyed at whatever cost of treasure and blood. But the Christian Premier of England held, and still holds, that it is his duty to do everything possible within the lines of honour and justice to preserve peace. To our mind, one of the most revolting spectacles of the present day is the disappointment manifested by so many people calling themselves civilized because these two great empires have not taken each other by the throat. The cool brutality with which some of these people can contemplate the horrors of the battlefield and the hospital, the callous way in which they speak about the thousands of devastated homes the struggle would make, leads one to ask whether civilization has done much for us after all. Some men who even profess to be Christians seem as cruel and callous as Poundmaker or Big Bear, with this difference, that these Indian chiefs risk their lives, while the men who call Gladstone a coward take precious good care that they keep out of rifle range. A good many of them wish to make some money out of the blood of their fellow-countrymen. That is the kind of patriots they are.

AS a rule we avoid any reference to congregational troubles, but when the affairs of a congregation are regularly before a Church court and the proceedings are published far and wide in the daily press, if the trouble points a moral then we think silence is not a duty. The Carlton Street Church troubles in this city should be a subject of earnest meditation to those Presbyteries that are always ready to organize new congregations on very flimsy grounds. Such work is usually done in this way. A few people, probably without any sufficient reason, break away from the congregation or congregations to which they belonged. They go before the Presbytery and ask for a new organization. Usually they make offers that they have not the ability to carry out, and promises that are

seldom kept. Quite often they are very angry or very much excited, and people in that condition usually speak more than they think. Some member of Presbytery is almost sure to champion their cause. Any number of specious arguments can always be used in support of such a position. It seems very evangelical and pious to fight for a new "centre of influence," as it is usually called, though the result sometimes shows that the influence is not particularly spiritual. The question is asked, Will you refuse the Gospel to these people? and generally the Presbytery gives way about this point and establishes a congregation that is no more needed than five wheels are needed on a waggon. The next thing is to lay siege to some minister, and the promise-making business is again gone into. Now the trouble begins. Some of the promises are broken early in the first year and a large number of them at the end of it. The glowing predictions that were made about crowds that were waiting to rush into the church the moment a settlement took place are found to have no foundation. The funds are not forthcoming; and then the leaders in the movement usually turn round and accuse the minister they deceived. The whole thing perhaps goes to pieces, or becomes an eye-sore to the Presbytery for years. The remedy for this is quite simple—never organize a congregation except in places where a congregation can exist and perhaps grow. Presbyteries might also be expected to know that the passions or even prejudices of human nature scarcely constitute a basis on which a Christian congregation can be expected to flourish.

**DON'T WASTE YOUR MINISTER'S TIME**

IN his admirable address at the Cobourg Conference, the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell suggested parenthetically a very valuable hint. Referring to the kind of preaching best suited to the present time, he indicated that much of the difficulty in giving serious thought and attention to the work of pulpit preparation was occasioned by the many interruptions to which every minister, more especially those of large cities, is subject. It was in no fretful or querulous spirit that the remark was made. It was very brief, but it spoke volumes.

Of the existence of this great evil many are aware; but, unfortunately, many more are entirely unconscious. The feeling that a minister's time is of comparatively little value is not confined to the indifferent who profess to imagine that a minister has little or nothing to do. In most congregations there are active workers who imagine that the minister may attend every conceivable kind of a meeting and take part in every scheme of good doing that is originated. Many belonging to this class of Christian workers are, without being aware of it, unreasonably exacting. If the minister has manliness and firmness enough to decline such invitations, he is too often misjudged, and his refusal is regarded as an offence.

In these particulars some people, it must be owned, are very unreasonable, but all the blame does not lie with them. On the ministers themselves some of it must rest. In some instances, overveering vanity tempts a minister to appear on every platform to make "the speech of the evening" on every occasion that offers, and to have a hand in every philanthropic, benevolent, or other movement that the fertile brain can invent. Without knowing or intending it, such a minister dissipates his energies, lessens the value of his special work, and instead of extending his influence he weakens it. In these busy days no man can do many things well. A multiplicity of duties necessarily renders the thorough performance of them all an impossibility. A wise man will husband his resources and aim at doing the special work he is called of God to do, to the very best of his ability.

Presbyterianism the world over owes its influence for good to faithful pulpit work. When this is neglected it becomes weak. To be a faithful ambassador of Christ, to preach the words of life, is the highest honour, the noblest field of labour, to which anyone can aspire. It is worthy of the consecration of the best talent and endowments that can be devoted to it, and the faithful ministry of the Word requires other cognate duties no less important, the neglect of which cannot be compensated for by attention to a host of multifarious calls that might be just as well if not better attended to by others. By a too easy compliance with burdensome and trivial exactions, ministers have accustomed people to make insatiable demands on their time, energies, and strength that seriously interfere with their own proper work, and which account