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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29th, 1890

THE brotherly love of the Baptist Church did not crop out to any extent in the proceedings of their late Convention. In fact if we may judge from some of the speeches the denomination is becoming narrower and more exclusive than ever. It would perhaps not be going too far to say that the feeling of the Convention or at least the feeling of some members of it seems to be more than exclusive—it seems to be positively bitter. The other denominations need not complain. A narrow, bitter Church is never a formidable rival.

A WELL-KNOWN ex-Mayor of Toronto, on being asked his opinion the other day about civic difficulties, gave the following reply:—

The trouble is just this: The men who ought to take an active interest in civic affairs just seat themselves comfortably in their arm-chairs, and say: "This and that is badly conducted," when they themselves will not give any of their time and attention to it.

This trouble is not by any means confined to Toronto. The trouble everywhere and in the Church as well as in the State is that so many people who might do good sit idle and find fault with those who are doing the best they can.

FROM the present up to the first Monday of January municipal reform will be one of the leading questions for discussion. There is a fundamental question lying behind all modes of municipal government which would stand a little threshing out. That question is: Can a good citizen be expected to devote time and labour to the government of his municipality and in return receive nothing but general abuse and newspaper scurrility? Fortunately for themselves some municipalities have a sufficient number of first-class citizens who are willing to do the work and pay the penalty. These municipalities are as a rule well governed.

BY the death of Dr. Austin Phelps, of Andover, the Church of Christ loses one of the most accomplished and useful writers on Homiletics and kindred subjects that this century has produced. A professor of Sacred Rhetoric since 1848, he may be said to have given his life mainly to one class of work. His later publications, "The Theory of Preaching," "Men and Books," "English Style in Public Discourse," are the highest results of the highest culture. They are such books as can be written only by a distinguished specialist who has given his life-time to his subject. The men who most enrich the Church are usually the men who do one thing well.

THE following *recipe* from the *Interior* may be useful to some of our readers at the present time:—

We have been asked what to do in a case of "Christian science." We answer: Let it alone. It is a mental malady which must run its course, and die out of itself. It was an epidemic in Boston, and has been in a number of localities in the interior and west, where it has since wholly subsided. In the most persistent individual cases it does not last more than two years—usually only a few months.

The best way to treat many other "mental maladies" is to let them alone with great severity. The more absurd epidemics of that kind are, the more quickly they burn themselves out if rational people pay no attention to them. There may be exceptional cases in which warning the unwary becomes a duty, but as a rule it is better to let absurdity expose itself.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY furnishes a fine illustration of the fact that Providence helps those who help themselves. When the institution declined to enter Federation there were grave doubts in the minds of many Presbyterians as to whether the proper course had been pursued. These

doubts were shared by some ardent and life-long friends of the old University. By a singular streak of good luck Queen's now finds herself the only University in Ontario outside of Toronto. Every student in Ontario that does not wish to go to Toronto—and there will always be many such for various reasons—will go to Queen's. The removal of Victoria to Toronto will give Queen's the whole of Eastern Ontario, which with a fair number of students from other places just means that Queen's will be crowded as Queen's deserves to be.

BETWEEN the rush to the cities and the rush to the West and North-West there need be no doubt that one of the coming problems for the Presbyterians of the older parts of Canada will be the condition of the country church. That problem had to be faced by the American Presbyterian Church, and they solved it in too many eastern places by shutting the old church up. Everybody knows that the population in many townships in Ontario is standing still, and in some declining. The long colonization trains that go west in March carry many of our best people. Their places in the old church are empty unless their farms happen to be bought by other Presbyterians. Every family added to a congregation in Manitoba or British Columbia may mean an empty pew in some church in Ontario or Nova Scotia. Of course these changes cannot be prevented, but a wise policy may make them comparatively harmless. Unless the circumstances are very exceptional, no new station should be opened in the face of a declining population. Consolidation should be the motto in all places that the people are leaving, and extension in the localities that are increasing in population. It may be just as wise policy to unite two congregations in some parts of Ontario as to start a new one in Toronto or Winnipeg.

THERE should be no difficulty in testing the genuineness and strength of the union sentiment which is said to exist in most of the churches. We are told that there is "union in the air." There may be. There are a good many things in the air. What practical men want is not union in the air, but more union in actual church work. To begin with there might be much more union *within* the denominations. Let congregations and mission stations within a mile or two be united. That would be union worth something. Let no more congregations be formed where they are not needed. Too many have been formed merely because a small party wanted to "split" or could not behave themselves, or could not get their own way, or wanted to gratify their vanity by "running" a church. Let all those who are in favour of union show their zeal and love by trying to put an end to the, we had almost said, insane practice of starting a congregation on every concession and street, and calling the insanity Christian enterprise. Then, too, unity might be greatly promoted by cultivating a spirit of unity within congregations. There is something almost grotesque in a man's conduct who speaks about union with other denominations, but does not know one-third the people who sit down with him at the communion table.

AN important decision has just been given by the Supreme Court at Buffalo which, if sustained, will make it difficult for a mother who believes in the Christian science treatment to retain her children. It appears that the child of a woman who is a strong Christian scientist was taken ill with spasms. The mother refused to allow anyone but a Christian scientist to treat the child. Almost as a matter of course the child died. The mother of the deceased had another child, and the grandparents took out a writ of Habeas Corpus, asking for the custody of the survivor on the ground that a mother who will not secure proper medical treatment for a child is not a proper person to have children under her care. The court sustained this view, and ordered that the child be given over to her grandparents. Assuming that the facts are as we have gathered them from a cotemporary, and that the decision will hold if appealed against, Christian science mothers in the State of New York simply retain their children until some relative possessed of common sense tries to bring the little ones to safer quarters. Chief Justice Galt held the other day in the Kent case that a full-grown man must be allowed to judge for himself whether he should or should not be treated by a Christian scientist. Presumably his Lordship would have held that in the case of a child some other person would be responsible—a decision exactly in line with the one given at Buffalo.

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR PROVINCIAL CONVENTION.

THE novelty of a movement is not in itself either a commendation or a disparagement. Antiquity will not now sustain a system that has ceased to be useful and that no longer commands popular confidence. New devices for the accomplishment of meritorious work are tested by their fitness and the methods by which they are promoted. The Society of Christian Endeavour has taken vigorous root during the few years since its inception. It is buoyant and progressive, and each year bears testimony to its growing popularity and usefulness. In some localities there may have been slight friction, occasioning a little distrust, since it was an organization outside the denominations, it might be more or less out of harmony with the government of individual congregations. By the well-defined objects of the society and the explicit declarations that it must be within the congregations in Presbyterian Churches, and amenable to sessions, all doubt and apprehension are removed. The fact that the movement so readily assimilates with all evangelical congregations, and has been so cordially welcomed shows that it meets a want that was generally felt. Its adaptability to existing needs is one of the strong points in its favour. Another is the great amount of real tangible good it has been the means of already accomplishing. Neither is it a doubtful benefit that it affords, as no other movement has yet done, an invaluable mode of discipline and practical training in Christian work of large numbers of young people, whose fine enthusiasm and devotion might have remained unused and undeveloped. It has proved up to the present that it is a most valuable factor in modern Church life.

The second annual meeting of the Ontario Provincial Union of the society was held in Hamilton last week at which a large number of delegates from all the principal points in the province attended. Dr. F. E. Clarke, of Boston, founder of the movement, was present and contributed much to the interest and success of the convention. A number of our prominent ministers took an active part in the proceedings. Public meetings were also held and the large attendance was an indication of the general interest taken in the progress of the society. The only matter that elicited warm discussion was the relation of the Epworth League, a Methodist organization, to the society. This was after debate and reference to a committee satisfactorily and harmoniously adjusted in nowise marring the fine spirit that pervaded the entire proceedings of the convention.

From the reports presented it appears that the number of societies had doubled during the year, but as seventy-four out of the 196 societies had not reported it was impossible to give a complete report. The figures given were as follows: Denomination of Societies—Presbyterian, ninety-four; Methodist, forty-eight; Baptist, twenty-three; Congregational, twenty; Episcopal, five; miscellaneous, six; total, 196 societies. Active members, 3,668; associate members, 1,795; Church members, 3,500. Proportion of active members, 20.8; associate members, 9.2; Church members, 17.8.

A very interesting feature of the proceedings was the presence and address of Prof. Henry Drummond. The rapidity with which he had to pursue his homeward journey prevented him from addressing other audiences, but as the time of his passing through Hamilton coincided with the meeting of the Convention he was able to deliver to the delegates one of his characteristic and interesting addresses, which will long be remembered by those who had the privilege of listening to it. The Convention was pleasant, profitable and inspiring. The young people will be stimulated by it to enter on their winter's work with renewed zeal and consecration.

THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

AMONG valuable modern religious institutions the Young Men's Christian Association is deservedly ranked. It has a distinct and valuable work to do. There was a feeling that in its earlier history it was in a measure out of sympathy with Church organizations and that if it was not antagonistic, it was at least cold and distant in its dealings with the Churches. It may be questioned whether this representation was at any time strictly true; at all events it is not true now, for wherever it exists it is in fullest harmony with the evangelical Church in all its branches. At the present time there is greater need for the labours of the Young Men's Christian Association than ever before. Life