

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

— PUBLISHED BY THE —

Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Company

(C. BLACKETT ROBINSON),

AT 5 JORDAN STREET, - TORONTO.

TERMS: \$2 per annum, in advance

ADVERTISING TERMS:—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, 1.50 per line; 1 year \$2.50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 1886.

A PRESBYTERIAN minister of Philadelphia left his church the other day, and united with another supposed to be more liberal. A short time before leaving he began a sermon in this way: "There was a man sent from God, and his name was Theodore Parker." It was high time for that minister to leave. One wonders how he ever found his way into a Presbyterian pulpit. Occasional cases of this kind, however, may be overruled for good if they make Churches more careful in the reception of ministers. The lesson is badly enough needed. A conservative policy on this question is the proper policy at present, and it will be a matter of deep regret if the Presbyterian Church in any of its branches should pursue any other. We are not throwing stones at any of our neighbours. Indeed we are not at all certain that the quantity of glass in our own ecclesiastical house is so small that we can afford to throw stones at anybody.

IF the Young Liberals have made mistakes in their convention held at Montreal last week, it has not been for want of advice. For weeks previous to the meeting they were told by all manner of advisers what they should and what they should not say and do, but with the independence and self-reliance of youth they took the course that seemed to them wisest and best. There was one thing they did which they might, just as well have left undone—a matter which, so far as we can see, in no way concerned them. They passed unanimously a congratulatory resolution to the newly elected Cardinal Archbishop of Quebec. It is not shown that he had been a life-long exponent of Liberal principles, or that he had rendered some distinctive service that called for special recognition at the hands of a political organization. It is difficult to understand why Liberals, young or old, should fawn upon a recently created ecclesiastical grandee. When the people of this country learn that politically all denominations are equal, and that Catholics and Protestants are simply citizens and vote as such, there will be less inclination to fish for the votes of any particular class.

THE terrible afflictions that frequently come upon God's people are among the most mysterious things in this life. The other week a frightful, crushing blow fell upon Dr. Charles L. Thompson, of Kansas City, formerly of the *Interior* staff, one of the most genial, gifted and lovable ministers in the American Church. His son, a young man of great promise, who had been married but a few days, whilst staying at a New York hotel, seized a pistol, and after taking the life of his bride, took his own. There seems to be no explanation of the awful deed but insanity. Still the affliction is a terrible one, and is none the easier borne because it comes almost immediately after the death of the young man's mother. Well, indeed, for her that she is gone; but who can think without the deepest sympathy of the lone and stricken husband and father? Why such terrible blows should come upon a genial, gifted and most honoured servant of God, whose writings have helped many thousands, is a mystery that no finite mind can fathom. All the solution we have is, "What thou knowest not now thou

shalt know hereafter." If the sympathy of a stranger in another land, who has often followed Dr. Thompson's gifted pen with delight, can be of any service to him in his trouble, he has ours. May the God whose help he has often asked for others sustain him in this terrible ordeal!

URING graduates of the theological seminaries to fully equip themselves for their life-work, the *New York Observer* makes the following most pertinent remarks:

Is there anything that any one of these graduates can do which he is not doing, and by which he might make sure of a life of increasing usefulness and honour? How may he lessen this shadow of possible failure which darkens his future pathway? We are quite sure that he can do very much in many ways to brighten the prospect and to make it quite evident to others that he is to be a successful minister. For instance, he may in all his work and self-culture put far more stress than is usual on being "apt to teach." Students are so much absorbed in accumulating stores of learning that they generally leave the whole matter of personal influence in using their material to the exigencies of the occasion. If they devote any attention to practical humilities, they regard it more as a diversion than the all important issue of all their work.

The accumulation of stores of learning, especially Biblical learning, is indispensable. A teacher of the Word cannot teach what he does not know. The material must be obtained. But of what use is the material if the owner cannot use it? His magazine may be large and well stored with the best possible ammunition; but if he cannot take out part of the ammunition and fire it so that it will strike, of what possible use is the magazine to the people? No matter how much knowledge a man may have, no matter how scholarly, cultivated, or even pious he may be, without "aptness" in presenting truth he can never be a preacher. Hence the importance not only of knowing the truth and feeling its power, but of being able to make others feel its power as well.

ONE-HALF of the population of the State of Vermont attend no place of worship. To make the number of attendants near one-half, infants brought by their parents and persons who attend but four or five times a year have to be counted. And yet Vermont is considered one of the most moral, law-abiding and God-fearing States in the Union. The *Christian at Work* would like to have the figures in regard to New York State and makes the following comments:

Do we rely too much—are we too complacent over our Churches and their regular services? Are the townships of New York neglected as those of the other thirteen Northern States east of the Mississippi are? Considering that a million and a half of the people in this State live in towns of less than 2,000 inhabitants, what sort of material is the country sending the city? What can be done about it, and what of the future? These questions suggest themselves with painful persistency, and Protestantism ought to be able to answer them. In brief, if our Protestant Churches are not doing what they should, is it not time they changed their methods, —may it not be well at times to learn something even from one's enemy?

In our opinion what is needed in many cases is not so much a change of method as more motive power. If all, or nearly all, the members of the Church were actively at work more than half the members of any civilized community could be induced to attend some place of worship. If the people of Vermont who attend church made it their business to bring others there the statistics would soon change. We should like to see the figures for Ontario. Of one thing we are thoroughly persuaded. If the members of the Churches in this Province were all to make wise, energetic and persistent efforts to bring their neighbours to church there would be few in Ontario not in attendance at some place of worship.

ONE paragraph in the report of the Committee on Statistics demands immediate attention. Two years ago a column was added for entering the number of families that contribute to the support of Gospel ordinances. The committee think this column is useless, because the figures show that nearly 19,000, or more than twenty-five per cent. of the families, contribute nothing. The committee cannot suppose, the report says, that there are so many families that pay nothing, and that there is so much neglect on the part of elders and managers as to permit them to neglect their duty in this respect. We should like to see the committee give their reasons for assuming that such a state of things cannot be supposed. The fact that numbers of families pay no money is to our mind much more easily supposed than that the

office-bearers of the congregations in question would send in incorrect returns. Taking the Presbyteries at random, we find one congregation in Toronto of 260 families, only 210 of which contribute, and another of 265, only 230 of which contribute. There we have in two congregations in one city no less than eighty-five families that pay nothing. Going east a little we find a congregation of 305 families only 250 of which pay anything. East farther still we find three congregations in one of which twenty-four families contribute nothing, in another twenty-eight and in the third thirty. In the Presbytery to which the respected Convener himself belongs we find a congregation in which forty-seven families are reported as contributing nothing, and another, and that not by any means a large one, in which twenty-two families are similarly reported. Now we fear these reports are substantially correct. We see no reason for thinking that they are not quite as correct as any other part of the congregational returns. The facts, we believe, are—sad facts they may be but still facts that numbers of people in many congregations never pay without being asked, and office-bearers for various reasons do not ask them. Some of these reasons we are prepared to discuss at a future day. We know of only one session out of seven hundred—quite likely there are more, but we know of only one—that ever deals with families that do not contribute, or even refuses a certificate to members who are quite able, but unwilling to settle up before leaving. This whole subject will bear discussion, and if probed to the bottom we fear it would be found that in some cases the number of nonpaying families reported is under rather than over the mark.

THE IRISH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

ON all sides the agreeable, harmonious and profitable character of the General Assembly has been favourably commented upon. It is exceedingly gratifying to observe that a like spirit prevailed in the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church recently held at Belfast. It is all the more remarkable that in the present critical state of affairs in Ireland, that while over the British Isles a political cyclone is careering, there should be such unanimity and brotherly love in the Irish Presbyterian Assembly, where, as in all the Presbyterian Churches, a spirit of sturdy independence prevails. Presbyterian party is sure to assert itself. Men of great personal influence will necessarily impress on others the importance of their individual convictions, but the days of personal leadership are well nigh over. It is therefore the more remarkable that there should have been on the two really burning questions before the Assembly such harmony of purpose and a manifest desire to reach unanimity of result.

On this side of the Atlantic we sometimes wonder that the instrumental music question should have continued to divide the Irish Assembly for sixteen long years, coming up as it did with all the regularity that attaches to the report of an important standing committee. It is astonishing that a *modus vivendi* could not be found until pressure from another quarter rendered a workable compromise necessary. It has to be remembered, however, that the Irish Presbyterian holds his convictions with the utmost tenacity, and can always give a good reason for the hope that is in him. The organ question has been year after year debated with remarkable ability on both sides. The subject has been thoroughly exhausted, and it has left the chief combatants in the same condition. On both sides there are audible sighs for rest from the ceaseless monotony of the organ-grinding debate. Another reason for the prolonged discussion and the energetic action to which it gave rise is to be found in the fact that on this question the Irish Church is pretty evenly divided. Had there been a preponderance on either side the matter would have been settled long ago. As it is, in view of the threatening aspect of political affairs, it was deemed wise to come to some understanding on the question of instrumental music. A committee, composed of the leaders on both sides, held successive meetings, and arrived at a truce which was subsequently ratified by the Assembly. The agitation is to cease. The opponents of the organ will discontinue the formation of defence associations, and the organists have agreed to use their influence to secure the silencing of the organ wherever it has been introduced. The truce is to continue for three years, and if all instruments are silenced for five