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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1886.

THE discussion on the eldership, to which we alluded in our last issue, promises to be interesting. Dr. Howard Crosby, ex-chancellor of the New York university, and one of the ablest men in the American Church, has come out in favour of the theory that elders are all of the same order. In a published letter he says:

The ruling elder (as I take it) is a *spiritual ruler* in the Church (the deacon being a helper in temporal things). Hence he is included in the category of 1 Tim. iii. 1-7. "bishop and elder" being synonymous (comp. ver. 5). He differs from the "minister" (so called) only as not *preaching* (1 Tim. v. 17.) The Church has only elders and deacons as officers. The elders are all of the same order, and hence should be eligible to the moderatorship. This is, to me, the only consistent doctrine—otherwise elders are not elders, but deacons.

Principal Caven, we understand, is reading this epistle with one of his exegetical classes this session. Perhaps, when the class comes to the passage quoted, the esteemed Principal may find time to give us his views on the question.

THIS issue of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN will come into the hands of many of our readers on Thanksgiving Day. We earnestly hope that it will find one and all well and hearty, enjoying the bounties of God's providence, and tracing up every stream of creature comfort to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Sixteen Thanksgiving Days have passed since THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN first visited the homes of many of its friends. During these years many changes have taken place. Some of these changes have been gladdening, some saddening. In common with our friends we too have known that there is little permanent in this life but the law of changes. The law which says all things here must change never itself changes. Still amidst all the changes there is much to be thankful for. The pleasant days far outnumber the dark ones. The mercies far outnumber the afflictions. That every reader, new and old, may have on this Thanksgiving Day a bright and happy home, a cheery and hopeful heart and, above all, the assurance of a home above is the earnest wish of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. Friends, new and old, may you and yours see many Thanksgiving Days and have much to be thankful for.

By the way, how is your prayer meeting doing this fall? Prayer meetings usual fall off in attendance during summer. The men do not attend in summer. Some of them do not attend in summer nor any other season. When the evenings get cool and lengthen, in September and October, attendance at prayer meeting is supposed to come up to the best. How is it with your meeting? Are the people well out, as Dr.

Burns used to say? How about the social qualities of the meeting? Do the people walk in stiff as posts, sit as unsympathetic as graven images and then go silently—perhaps we should almost say sullenly—out? Or do they seem to enjoy the meeting and often shake hands and have a little friendly chat at its close? How about the spiritual atmosphere of your prayer meeting? Do the people sing heartily, listen to the exposition appreciatively, and do the brethren who occasionally lead in prayer do so with appropriateness and a reasonable degree of fervour? If so, you have a fairly good prayer meeting, assuming of course that the attendance is fair. Do the people sit with a dissatisfied, fault-finding air, take no interest in the meeting and sigh for excitement and Sam Jones? If so, your meeting would bear some improvement.

THE liturgy question keeps cropping up in the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches on the other side of the lines. It seems to be one of these questions that will not down. The Association of the Congregational Churches, at their late meeting in Chicago, appointed a committee to consider the liturgical enrichment of the Congregational service. It is asserted that a large number of people go over every year to the Episcopal Church, and it seems to be assumed that all or nearly all go over for the sake of the liturgy. There is a huge fallacy just here, that, so far as Canada is concerned, may be easily detected. Let any body make a list of all the Presbyterians he knows that went over to the Episcopal Church, and ask himself how many went over for the sake of taking part in the prayers. The moment one begins to do that, he finds himself beginning to laugh. The idea of the majority of them becoming Episcopalians because they did not get an opportunity to pray in their own Church is so transparently absurd that it excites the risibilities. One in a thousand may have gone over for that reason, but the nine hundred and ninety-nine went for reasons of a very different kind. The question of using a modified liturgy occasionally is one that will bear discussion on its merits. So far as Canada is concerned, the discussion will be gravely prejudiced by saying that Presbyterians become Episcopalians from pious motives, and go over because they want to pray. The few who have gone were not specially noted for praying before they left—at least the vast majority of them were not.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian-at-Work* writes in this way of a Sabbath spent in Toronto:

We arrived on Saturday evening, and soon began to realize the quiet of the city. On Saturday night all saloons are closed at seven o'clock, and are so kept closed until Monday morning, so that illicit selling is a very rare thing. The quiet of the Sabbath surpasses that of Edinburgh, or of any American city. I asked a friend to guide me to the homes of the poorest and the lowest of the inhabitants, but could not find any of the usual signs of disorder. No street cars run on the Sabbath, no newspapers are published and no mail goes out; yet Toronto grows, and is not a whit behind the times. Her statesmen have found out that righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people. We do not know that this city has a greater proportion of religious people than our United States cities, but we do know that her political economists have found out that law and order are capital for the working people as well as the churchmen, and that the highest of police regulations is a legal insistence upon Sabbath rest. There is also a strong temperance sentiment in the community, although there is not any active prohibition movement.

Toronto is noted for a good many things. The rapid growth of the city, the educational institutions, the large number of young men who come here to study, the cleanliness of our city press, the good order on the streets and several other good things have often been pointed out by visitors. There is one thing, however, that strikes a stranger so much as our Sabbaths. We have, many say, the best kept Sabbath in the world. And the Sabbath is no better kept in Toronto than in many other parts of Ontario. Let Ontario honour God by remembering the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, and God will honour and prosper our beloved Province.

SABBATH HARVESTING.

THERE is likely to be another commotion in Scotland over the Sabbath question. Hitherto that land, so strong in Presbyterianism, has been noted for its Sabbath keeping, but it is remarked that considerable change is observable in the manner in which the sacred day is now observed there. When great corporations urge the performance of work on that day vigorous protests are usually made; but when

some distinguished ecclesiastic gives utterance to opinions calculated to lessen the people's respect for one of heaven's best blessings to weary toilers, there is no question that serious harm results. Quite recently no less a person than Dr. Cunningham, of Crief, who has been the recipient of the highest honours in the gift of the Scottish Church, said in a sermon, "When the season was late and the weather threatening, it was a religious work to go to their fields rather than their churches, and to save the precious fruits which God had given for the sustenance of human life."

When a faithful servant of Christ inculcates some manifest Christian duty, practical obedience is often felt to be difficult. This monition of the distinguished Scottish divine harmonizes so completely with selfish human nature and the worldly spirit that many would only be too glad of such sanction to cover their inclination. No doubt some who listened to that sermon would have serious misgivings, and were they to act upon the suggestion there would be qualms of conscience not easily got rid of. It might be that Sabbath harvesting would be sheltered under the plea that it was a work of necessity and mercy, but who that was inclined to take advantage of the license given by the above declaration would not be equally justified in urging the same plea for engaging in other secular work. Has there been a single instance of the proposed or actual infraction of the Sabbath law, where the requirements of necessity and mercy have not been put forth? The opening of art museums, the running of pleasure excursions, labour in post offices, railway traffic and such like have in every instance been sought on the plea that it was both necessary and merciful that the quiet of the Sabbath should be broken, and the great purposes of that sacred day put aside by their introduction. If farmers felt free to work in the fields on Sabbath during harvest, would not many of them, inclined to follow Dr. Cunningham's advice, reason, not illogically, that if Sabbath labour was justifiable in that case it would be in many others? There is not an occupation followed, but would afford occasion for similar disregard of the requirements of the divine law.

The real question is not, Is this or that particular practice permissible on the Sabbath? but, Is the eternal, immutable moral law given by God to man, not only as a test of his obedience, but designed for his highest welfare here and hereafter, binding on the conscience? It is all very well to speak of the scrupulosity of the Jewish observance of the Sabbath, but the law itself is one of the Ten Words which the lapse of centuries cannot invalidate. Is it better to obey the law of God, or follow the opinions of fallible man, in such cases?

We who value the religious privileges and the manifold blessings that the sacred day of rest brings, will view with alarm every proposal that seeks to infringe on its entirety. It is a God-given, precious heritage not to be surrendered to human dictates however plausible.

FIT AND PROPER PERSONS.

IT is the general belief that the Parliamentary elections are near at hand. The political parties are organizing for the contest. There are indications that the strife will be fierce, and the interest widespread. It would be pleasing if these contentions between opposing politicians could be carried on with less bitterness and more chivalric consideration for each other than is sometimes too plainly visible. Plain speaking, free and full discussion, are, however, vital for a thorough understanding of the public questions on which the respective parties appeal to the electorate. Where feeling is keen it is natural that occasionally there should be fire in the orator's words, and somebody is sure to get a scorching, whether he deserves it or not.

Presbyterians, as well as their brethren of other denominations, are in general keen politicians. It has been their habit in the past to think and act for themselves. Not from them does the cry come for special favours in return for their votes. No one is authorized in their name to pledge the Presbyterian vote to either party. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the Presbyterian vote. The column in political quotations where it would occur is a blank. It is not saleable. Presbyterians, it is to be hoped, vote as Christian men under a due sense of responsibility; they certainly vote as citizens, and esteem it a high privilege to record an untrammelled vote for the men