

INTERNATIONAL LESSON SCHEMES

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A PROSPEROUS congregation depends, no doubt, largely upon pastor, elders and other office-bearers. They can do much to inspire the people with lofty aims and desires for spiritual advancement, but however devoted they may be they cannot do everything. Unless the people cooperate progress will be slow and difficult. When the religious zeal of a congregation loses its warm glow, progress is impossible until the mass becomes fused under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is the baptism the congregations need. It may not be amiss for all who wish to see their beloved Zion prosper to enquire what is amiss.

TORONTO furnishes every winter a striking illustration of how extremes meet in city life. It will not be denied by any fair man that the Queen City stands well in charitable and religious work. There would be no use in denying that more bed-ridden and dead men vote at an election in Toronto than in all the rest of Ontario put together. Taking them all together the people who work for truth and righteousness in this city will compare favourably with a similar body in any part of the world, but it may fairly be questioned if they are as active and resourceful as the personators who poll dead men's votes at every election.

PERHAPS the racy writer of "Impressions" in the *Globe* does not wish to be taken seriously when he refers to the "unusual ability in statecraft" evinced by the Prince of Wales when His Royal Highness visited Canada thirty years ago. The ability in dodging the Orange arches was displayed by the Duke of Newcastle who had the heir apparent under his control and regulated all his movements. Newcastle was a genuine John Bull. Orange celebrations were illegal in England. The Duke was determined Orangeism should not be recognized by the Queen's son in Canada. Like a typical Englishman Newcastle stood his ground. He ordered the boat to steam out of the Kingston harbour without landing the Prince, and indulged in some rather circuitous driving in Toronto to keep his Royal Highness from passing under Orange arches. The affair created much excitement at the time, but has been well nigh forgotten. We allude to it now merely to illustrate how events considered important enough to stir up bad blood may be forgotten in a few years. How many things are people storming about now that nobody will think about a few years hence?

BRANTFORD is one of the few places in Ontario that can stand Church extension at the present time. The population increased over three thousand in ten years and is now nearly thirteen thousand. The city can perhaps stand another Presbyterian congregation and Zion Church can afford to found a colony if any congregation can. It must have been a little trying to the pastor and office-bearers of that congregation to see the St. Andrew's people move out, but no doubt they con-

soled themselves with the thought that it was all for the good of the cause. St. Andrew's has our best wishes, but we are firmly persuaded that though extension may be the right thing in Brantford, St. Thomas and perhaps one or two other places, concentration must be the policy in the older provinces if the Church is to hold its own. The system of opening a church at every man's door never was a wise one even for the man, but it could be endured while the population was increasing. Its bitter fruits are now being reaped by many a struggling congregation and by many a half-starved minister's family. It is easy to start a cause. Anybody can do that, but the crucial test is sure to come later on. Extension may be the right policy in Brantford. Doubling up is the proper thing to do in dozens of other places.

THIS week the solid citizen will complain about the amount of time he has lost over the municipal elections. His domestic comfort has been disturbed by going to meetings, his good taste has been outraged by the sayings of some of the municipal orators, his sense of fair play has been shocked by some of the newspapers, his dislike of the rude fellows who shout and ask questions from the back seats has grown into positive disgust, his new overshoes have been ruined by the mud and his new suit smells of the polling booth and committee room. Worse than all his wife declares she will stand it no longer. Altogether the solid citizen is in a bad way. Now there is no sort of sense in this kind of grumbling. In many cases thoughtlessness and in others utter unrelieved selfishness is at the root of it all. If the people are to manage their own local affairs they must just take the trouble so to do. The affairs will not manage themselves. Streets do not make themselves, lamp posts do not grow, water does not run limpid into even rich people's houses, burglars do not arrest themselves and put themselves in the lock-up. We must either bear the burdens of self government, or have a dictator, or let our local affairs go to the dogs. Too many people look upon self government as a kind of vulgar nuisance. Would they kindly suggest something in its place. The right to control our own business cost our fathers a good deal, and some of us would not like to throw it away without having some idea of what is to come next.

IT is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the annual congregational meeting. The work of the past year is laid before the meeting in a condensed form and new measures are taken to carry on the congregational operations for another year. Office bearers are appointed on whose faithfulness and efficiency the prosperity if not the very existence of the congregation largely depends. Wrinkles that may have been formed in one way or another during the year are straightened out and a hundred and one things done that cannot be done at any other meeting. The fact is the congregational meeting is the crucial test of the Presbyterian form of church government. There the people have the business entirely in their own hands and they show whether or not they can govern themselves. As a rule they show quite clearly that they can, but once in a while a meeting is held which makes thoughtful people wonder whether after all it would not be better to have church affairs managed by a bishop or a pope or some official of that kind. The best way to prove that popular church government like ours is the right kind is to make it do the work well. Can there be anything more absurd than to hear a man make an elaborate argument to prove that our church government is Apostolic while under that government his own congregation is perhaps running to seed? That kind of absurdity is hard on the apostles. If the plan is of divine origin let it be decently worked. Congregational meetings are mostly held this month. Do you see the point?

THE *Christian At Work* is publishing a series of papers on Church unity written by representative men. In the last issue there are contributions from Principal Caven, Dr. Talbot W. Chambers of New York and Dr. Donald Fraser of London. Dr. Fraser does not seem to think that there is any particular need for organic unity. He says:—

The Church of God can maintain its life and its unity under diversities of form and administration, and as nations flourish under different systems of government, and none the less may cultivate the feeling and obligation of a common humanity, there seems no good reason why Christians who find themselves under diverse ecclesiastical organizations should not recognize this common faith and life in one catholic Church.

There is no good reason, and real unity is often hindered rather than helped by agitation for uniformity. Keeping the question of external organization constantly before the minds of the people tends to ignore and belittle the fact that all Christians are one in Christ Jesus now. Dr. Fraser is however of the opinion that denominationalism run mad is a bad thing, and in this view of the case all sensible people will agree with him:—

This however is no excuse for the heaping up of denominations in the same community. No doubt some of the separations insisted on by our fathers were justifiable; but the grounds which once existed have in many cases almost disappeared, and happily our age has a larger way of looking at things and more breadth of tolerance. There has arisen, in my humble opinion, a grand opportunity for recasting Protestant society in wider, stronger ecclesiastical formations. We have been trifling too long with the unity of the Church and weakening its authority and dignity in the minds of the people by our miserable fashion of starting independent "causes," denominational and undenominational, disintegrating when we ought to have been consolidating, and then calling on this man or even on that child to "choose a denomination" and to "join" a Church. The Church used to be a mother of children; but nowadays one sees young Christians straying about as motherless waifs and popping into this sect or that as though into some shop that deals in spiritual wares.

Trifling with the unity of the Church and sighing after uniformity are neither dignified nor profitable exercises for Christian people to be engaged in. Dr. Fraser's closing words have the genuine ring and make one sorry that he ever left Canada. "Who has not seen children that ought to be at home in their beds in the evenings instead of at meetings and in their father's pew every Sabbath, called upon to go and select a Church for themselves? The Church needs several things more than it needs uniformity.

THE New York correspondent of a leading religious journal gives the following account of the manner in which justice is administered in that city. Should any reader of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN happen to have a neighbour who inclines to political union said neighbour should be favoured with a perusal of this paragraph:—

A notable illustration of the workings of our criminal courts is furnished in the career of this Gould. It would take columns of this paper to give a brief outline of all the murders, murderous assaults, and various other crimes which this fellow has been mixed up in either as principal or accessory since he began his career in this city years ago. He is without doubt one of the most vile and desperate characters on the face of the earth—cruel, cunning, and treacherous as a Sioux Indian, and savage as a beast of the jungle. There is hardly any crime or shameful deed known to depraved men that he has not committed. One of his favourite "diversions" is to beat and disfigure the wretched women who frequent his foul dens. He was "up" before one of the courts a few months ago for a crime of this kind, but nothing came of it. Nothing ever comes of any case in which Gould is particularly interested. Through some mysterious means, known only to the initiated, this ruffian always escapes punishment. Had he his just deserts, he would have ornamented a gallows-tree years ago. As it is, he is not only permitted to pursue his bloody and brutal career, but is actually licensed by the city to run a den where thieves and other rascals like himself conspire together against the public peace. And we are supposed to be living under a Christian Government.

Occasional failures of justice may take place under any system. So long as judges, juries and witnesses are human, the guilty will sometimes escape and the innocent sometimes suffer. But surely there must be something radically wrong about a system which permits criminals to escape *continuously*. To escape the consequences of a criminal act is one thing, to build up a criminal career under the meshes of the law is another and much more serious thing. Criminals are dangerous enough even when the courts can crush them if caught; they must be much more dangerous if they control the courts.

WHY ARE THE JEWS PERSECUTED?

IT was generally thought that the persecution of the Jews was a thing of the past. The cruelties inflicted on the dispersed race whenever they found a temporary resting place during the middle ages were supposed impossible of repetition. It has, however, been reserved for the closing decade of the nineteenth century to witness, not perhaps similar atrocities inflicted on Hebrew sojourners in Spain and Morocco, but deeds of cruelty akin in spirit to those perpetrated on the Iberian peninsula and beyond the pillars of Hercules. In Germany and in Austria the *Judenhetze* ran its course a few years since, and, though powerful influences have put it under restraint, there is no saying when or how it may again make its presence irksomely felt. Russia, however, is now the greatest offender, and the harsh treatment meted out to the descendants of Abraham is such that no European nation other than the Russian would think of tolerating. The policy