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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 1886.

SEVERAL replies to a short communication on Revivals, which appeared in a recent issue, have been received. For some of them space will be found as speedily as possible. Unauthenticated letters, without exception, on this or any other topic, are necessarily excluded.

DURING this part of the ecclesiastical year applications for admission to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church usually come before Presbyteries. There is one point in our polity that should be fully exhibited to the gaze of every applicant before he takes the final step. This Church does not undertake to provide a pastorate for any man. We can give him any amount of work in the mission field. We can let him loose on our vacancies. We can do nothing more. Before he can be a pastor the people must call him. He may get a call in a month, or a year, or he may never get one. He must take his chance. As matters now stand, the Church cannot even make him certain that he will get a hearing in a vacancy. Had we a good scheme for supplying vacancies we might assure him that he will get a chance at the people; but at present we cannot give him even this assurance. An Episcopalian, or Methodist, or any other man whose Church always provides her ministers with a pastorate, should consider this point well before making a change. Our system may or may not be the right one; but it makes a call from the people indispensable if a minister is to occupy the honoured position of a pastor. If this point had been put vividly before the minds of all applicants considerable disappointment and perhaps some suffering would have been saved.

Now for the usual homilies about the depravity of people who listen to speeches six or seven hours long in Parliament and complain about the length of a forty minute sermon. As a matter of fact people do not listen to speeches at all in Parliament in the sense in which they listen to sermons. The members go out and in, write letters, read papers, chat, cheer, sleep, interrupt, indulge in occasional horse play of various kinds, go out and have a smoke, and some we fear go down to the lower regions occasionally and refresh themselves with something stronger than water. The leaders on both sides are supposed to listen to everything, although they don't always do so. The few who are specially interested in any question give attention. The member who is expected to reply, or is waiting to deliver a speech and has his notes all ready, usually keeps the run of the debate. But the idea that a majority of the members of the house listen to a long speech attentively for six or seven hours is pure fiction. This may happen occasionally but not one time in a hundred. The people in the galleries, if they have seldom been there before, may give something like sustained attention; but no "frequenter" does unless he has a special interest in the question or in the member speaking. If these seven-hour speeches were delivered once a week, or once a month, or even once a year, nobody would listen to them at all. No comparison can be made between parliamentary and pulpit oratory. The conditions are entirely different. The homilies about listening to long speeches in Parliament and clamouring for short sermons have no force.

THE Rev. J. R. Jaques, D.D. Ph.D., gives seven reasons in the *Christian Guardian* why certain evangelists are so successful. Dr. Jaques will probably agree with us in saying there is a most important question behind these reasons—What is success? Probably he will also agree with us in saying that success in the highest and best sense means the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of believers. Now, if the learned Doctor agrees with us on these points we are of the opinion that it will be very difficult for him to show that any considerable number of evangelists are more successful than the regular ministers of, say, his own church. A pastor who adds twenty or thirty or forty members to his congregation each year is, numbers alone being considered, a more successful worker than an evangelist who adds, say fifty or one hundred and then leaves, never again to return. Too frequently his converts leave him or very soon afterward. Numbers, however, are not the only thing to be considered. Converts should be weighed as well as counted. A certain proportion of those that unite with a congregation under any circumstances will fall off; but it is notorious that of the number who unite during the services of the typical evangelist a larger proportion almost always backslide. Exceptions there may be, but upon a large induction this will be found to be the rule. We have nothing to say against the employment of any properly accredited evangelist if the responsible authorities of the church or congregation desire to employ him. But before deciding that any one order of workers is more successful than any other it may be well to ask—What is success? Then we must know the facts in any given case. And we submit that the *real* facts in any case can rarely be learned from paragraphs or telegrams in the newspapers. You read in the journals about a great revival in a certain locality. Go there and converse with Christian men of undoubted piety and standing, and how often do you find that what you read is, if not absolutely false, entirely misleading.

FOR some weeks past the most astonishing reports have been in circulation in regard to the effects produced in Cincinnati by the labours of the Rev. Sam Jones. It has been stated that his meetings were attended by 9,000 people, that 4,000 persons had joined the Churches as the result of his labours, that the Sabbath theatres were closed, that the concert halls and saloons were also closed on Sabbath, and, in short, that a great moral and spiritual revolution had taken place in Cincinnati. Would that all these things were so! The *Herald and Presbyterian*, a friendly though thoroughly reliable authority on such matters, shows that they were not so. The hall referred to—galleries included—has chairs for just 4,254 people, and if 9,000 were in it the stage and the aisles must have held nearly 5,000—a most unlikely thing, to put the matter mildly. The Churches have not received one tenth of 4,000 members, the additions in many of them, our contemporary states, being smaller than for the corresponding period last year. The saloons unfortunately are *not* closed on Sabbath and never were. The theatres were closed but are open again. Mr. Jones made no direct assault on Sabbath desecration, and the Sabbath theatres were closed for a time through the exertions of the Law and Order League. The League intends to proceed against the Sabbath concert halls soon, and may also attack the saloons. As we might naturally expect, the *Herald and Presbyterian* regrets being compelled to make these corrections, but feels that the truth should be told. When will people learn that the cause of God is not helped, but mightily hindered, by such exaggerations? What must any candid, unconverted citizen of Cincinnati think when he reads that the saloons of the city have been closed on Sabbath by a revival movement, and then looks at hundreds of them in full blast? Better that no report at all should be given of any religious movement than a report which people on the ground know to be without foundation in fact. There is too much reason to fear that many similar reports are as foundationless as those that originated in Cincinnati. If there is anything in this world about which men should be careful in speaking surely it is God's cause.

THE Dominion Parliament has by an unexpectedly large majority sustained the Government in their refusal to commute the death sentence passed upon Louis Riel. A considerable number of Liberal members voted with the Government, and seventeen of Sir

John's French supporters voted against him. Though our feelings leaned strongly to the side of mercy, even to Louis Riel, we have from the first taken the ground that, all things considered, justice forbade any interference with the sentence of the court. The conclusion to which we came was the conclusion at which the Dominion Parliament arrived; but we none the less admire the conduct of the members who dared to break away from party ties and vote as their consciences dictated. All honour to the man, whether of French or British origin, who has the moral courage to stand up in a small minority and vote as he thinks right. The threat to drive the French "bolters," as they are called, and Mr. Blake and the small number of Liberals who voted with him from Parliament, is *base, thoroughly base*. If there is no room in the public life of Canada for men who dare to vote as they deem right then so much the worse for Canada. John Bright has more than once broken loose from his party, ay, once at least, resigned his seat in the Cabinet, because he could not agree with his colleagues on one point. If we cannot understand such conduct so much the worse for us. We had always tried to believe that public opinion is not so degraded in Canada and public life not so rotten as many allege; but if party has so corrupted the people that a member cannot vote on the hanging of a rebel Half-breed without having his political life threatened, then Canada is certainly in a bad way. Men like Messrs. Blake, Mills, Cameron and some other Ontario men who voted with them can do quite as well without a seat in Parliament as Parliament can do without them. And the same is true, we have no doubt, in regard to some of the French Conservatives who voted against the Government. For anything we know to the contrary it may be true of all of them. Some of them are certainly exceptionally able men whose services the country needs even if they do think Louis Riel should not have been hanged.

CONGREGATIONAL CO-OPERATION.

THE days of happy indolence and listless dreaming in congregational life are fast passing away. Few will regret their departure. It may be that sometimes those who are fully impressed with the fact that the demand of the age is for an active, living Christianity encounter temptations in other directions. These are temptations not to be despised. There is one common to our imperfect human nature which too often makes itself vexatiously felt. The active Christian is certain that his more contemplative brother or sister is clearly in the wrong. And he himself is liable to be judged as officious, or actuated by questionable motives. There is a strong tendency to hasty, incomplete and censorious judgments. Another temptation to be guarded against on the part of the active Christian worker is that of neglecting personal religious culture. Reading, prayer and meditation are essential to true personal spiritual progression. It is from the want of these indispensable exercises that so much of the angularity, crutchiness and intolerance to be met with originate.

In order to unify and make more effective a congregation's power for good, there must be large-hearted and generous consideration shown by the members toward each other. The ideal congregation is not inaptly described as a family. It should be a happy family, and this can only be when the true spirit of Christian brotherhood is approximately realized. Did this spirit predominate in our Christian congregations, there would be a better division of labour than is now the case. All cannot fill the same offices, all are not fitted for leadership; but a pervasive desire for the real advancement of a congregation's spiritual prosperity will lead to the selection of those who by devotion, energy, wisdom and common sense are best fitted for the various duties required of them. The knowledge that the best workers have been chosen, irrespective of adventitious circumstances, because of their special adaptation for particular work will increase the confidence of the congregation generally, and will obviate a great and purposeless waste of energy in fault-finding, and remove the fictitious excuses that some are inclined to offer for their indolence and especially for their want of liberality.

Congregational co-operation has more than negative virtues to recommend its practice. In our Church courts and at congregational meetings we sometimes hear elders disparagingly spoken of. It is just pos-