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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 20th, 1892.

THE untrue statement that two of the trustees of Queen's University are Roman Catholics seems to have created much more interest in the Church than the reported decrease of over five thousand Presbyterians in the Maritime Provinces. It also completely eclipses the census report which shows 230,000 Presbyterians that the Church probably fails to reach and knows nothing about. Surely looking after our own people is as important as keeping imaginary Catholics off the Board of Queen's.

IT is greatly to be regretted that the Hon. Edward Blake addressed a political meeting the first Sabbath he was in Ireland. Right thinking men of all parties and creeds would have thought all the more highly of him had he declined. There is no room, however, for the pharisaical comparisons we see made between a Canadian and an Irish Sabbath. Quebec is a part of Canada and there is probably not a Roman Catholic Church door in that province at which political meetings have not been held at the close of the Sabbath morning service during election contests. Unfortunately Mr. Blake was not able to tell his Longford constituents that in his country political meetings are not held on the Lord's Day.

ADVOCATES of political union should make a note of the fact that across the lines millionaire capitalists possess and exercise the power of hiring a small army to shoot down strikers. In such cases the law of the land is put to one side and the plutocrat hires a few hundred men on the streets of New York and Chicago to do his shooting. The kind of men engaged may easily be "guessed" from the kind of work they agree to do. Were the labouring men thus shot down Russian serfs, one could not help feeling for them. They are, however, American citizens with ballots in their hands, and if they vote for laws that make millionaires in a few years, and that give them power to hire a small army to shoot their employees, they must just take the consequences.

NOW that the Detroit "Prince" has been safely lodged in prison there is a first class opening for anybody who wishes to humbug the intelligent public in religious matters. How does it come about that with all our boasted educational machinery the people are just as easily fooled as ever? Why do not some of our high-toned educational conventions, like the one that assembled in Montreal last week, wrestle with that question? We have many a time heard that knowledge is power. Why does not the power obtained in our schools and colleges enable people to resist and expose impostors? Any kind of a scamp can make headway among the people now just as readily as when there were no colleges and the school houses were log. Indeed we doubt very much if "Prince Michael" could have fooled the early settlers. A wide awake Ulster man would have taken down his blackthorn and compelled the scoundrel to make railway time along the concession.

THE *Halifax Witness* is somewhat exercised about the position that Dr. Wild and Dr. Douglas have taken on the question of Sir John Thompson's fitness for the Premiership. The *Witness* contends that "it would not be in any degree right or manly to set him aside on the ground of his faith." That is sound Presbyterian doctrine, and so far as we are aware no representative Ontario

man except Dr. Wild ever proposed to do anything of the kind. The first Premier of Ontario was a Roman Catholic, and so far as we can remember nobody ever raised a question about Sandfield Macdonald's faith even when he withdrew the grant from two Protestant Universities. Something was said six years ago about the faith of the present Minister of Public Works, but the people snored the cry under. What Dr. Douglas contends is not that Sir John Thompson's faith should be a bar to his promotion, but that he should not be promoted to the Premiership because he is a lay Jesuit. The *Witness* admits the force of this contention, but alleges that no proof has been given to show that Sir John is a Jesuit. Possibly Dr. Douglas thinks the proof is so plain and palpable that any one can see it who wishes to do so. One thing at all events needs no proof. A Protestant turned into Catholic is pretty sure to be more intolerant than born and bred Catholics. D'Arcy McGee once sharply rebuked a Catholic convert in Montreal who made a specialty of pouring vituperative abuse upon Protestants. "Don't think," said McGee, "that I have a quarrel with your former co-religionists because you have one." However, Sir John Thompson's friends cannot complain about intolerance so long as he is supported by all the Orangemen in Parliament and by a large majority of those outside.

THE Established Church of Scotland does not seem to have acted with its usual wisdom in forcing the disestablishment issue to the front and making it the main Scottish question in the pending elections. Gladstone has never declared himself in favour of disestablishment. The most he ever said was that if the elections of Scotland declared in favour of disestablishment he would put the question on his programme. For years and years the voluntaries of England, Wales and Scotland have complained bitterly because the Old Parliamentary hand would not fully commit himself and go forward. It is no secret that he did not wish to undertake the settlement of any such question at his time of life. Under these circumstances the Kirk might have let the question slumber as long as it would slumber, but the Church Defence Association forced the fighting, the Kirk went as a unit against Gladstone, and the Sabbath before polling day nearly every Established Church pulpit in Midlothian rang with sermons against the Old Chief and his schemes. The net result was to pull down his majority to 700 and put him into very bad humour. Now he says in effect that he did not wish to test the disestablishment question at the polls, but as the Kirk insisted on having a verdict he may have to give the voice of the people effect. We all know what that means. One distinguished Canadian has gone across the water to keep Ireland right; another—Principal Grant—had better go over and keep the Scotch Establishment from helping to disestablish itself.

THE Presbyterians of Ulster must be the most unselfish people under the sun. One of their clergymen has lately been showing how much consideration they get from their Episcopalian allies in the matter of official appointments. Five years ago there were over 600 Episcopalian officials in Ireland and only twenty six Presbyterians. The Presbyterians were of course mostly in the lowest rooms. In the Irish Peerage there were 174 Episcopals but not one solitary Presbyterian. In the Irish Privy Council thirty-six Episcopals but not one Presbyterian. There were thirty Lieutenants of counties—twenty-nine Episcopals and one Presbyterian; twelve Superior Court judges—eleven Episcopals and one Presbyterian, sixteen County Court judges—fourteen Episcopals and two Presbyterians; fifty-five Resident magistrates—fifty-three Episcopals and two Presbyterians, nineteen superintendents—all Episcopals. And so on through the whole list of officials until you get over 600 Episcopals and twenty-six Presbyterians. The list of Roman Catholic officials is large but not nearly so large as the Episcopalian. The figures given were prepared five years ago and it is not likely they are any better now. There were very few Presbyterians from Ulster in the last House of Commons. They did the voting and paid, you may rest assured, the heavy end of the election bills and the Episcopals took the seats. The explanation given for the small number of Presbyterians in office adds insult to injury. It is alleged that the Episcopals are so much better educated than Presbyterians that they should fill all the higher positions.

THEOLOGICAL SPECULATION IN FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND.

IF a corporate union of the Christian Church is ever to be realized, it will not be reached by complete doctrinal agreement, nor will it be brought about by unanimity of opinion on questions even of the most vital interests. From the nature and importance of Christian doctrine, and from the constitution of the human mind, it is evident that a rigid mechanical uniformity of belief is both impossible and undesirable. The various tendencies of current theological thought afford evidence of the wide differences the speculative opinions of able and good men present. There is a larger spirit of tolerance among those who differ compared with the state of things existing some years ago. Deviation from recognized theories was looked upon as a moral transgression and a plain evidence that a course of declension was being entered upon. Now it is understood that a man may be a sincere truth seeker and a devout believer in Jesus Christ even although he may have doubts on some of the points brought into prominence by the researches and speculations of the higher critics.

A short time ago there appeared in these columns a brief outline of a paper by the venerable Swiss theologian, Professor Godet, which formed the substance of his address at the opening session of the course of the Theological Faculty of the Independent Church of Neuchâtel last autumn. Considerable importance is attached to it by French-speaking Protestants since it is a clear and distinct expression of the opinions held by those attached to the distinctive doctrines of the evangelical Church. It has suggested an interesting though rather lengthy paper by Professor Gretillat on "Theological Thought Among French Protestants," which has been translated by the Rev. Joseph H. Dulles, A.M., librarian of Princeton Seminary, and appears in the July number of the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*. And here it may be stated parenthetically that Principal Caven's clear, comprehensive and scholarly paper, published in these pages some months ago, on "The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament," is the opening contribution in the new number of this standard quarterly. The conflict of opinion among French-speaking Protestants must, to some extent, be a matter of regret to all who desire to see a vigorous practical Christianity moulding the thoughts and lives of men. The revival of religion that influenced men so eminent and useful as Caesar Malan, Theodore Gaussen, Merle D'Aubigny, Agenor de Gasparin and others, in course of time spent its force. The rationalistic torpor out of which it sprang again reappeared, and the controversies that followed have not been beneficial to all the scholarly men who have taken part in them.

Among French Protestants, as among others, very much the same subjects are being discussed. An important one being, what is authority in religion, and how far is its exercise compatible with individual liberty and responsibility? French Protestant thinkers renounce the opinion so strenuously maintained by the Papacy that the Church is the chief authority in matters of religion. The Bible has been received by the Protestant Church as the only rule of faith and practice, but its authority has been eagerly questioned of late, and the extreme theory of verbal inspiration maintained by Gaussen in his "Theopneustia" is no longer upheld by even the most orthodox of the Swiss theologians. They do hold, however, and with commendable firmness, that the Bible is inspired and that it contains the revelations of God's will for man's salvation. There are others who boldly challenge the authority of Scripture and make personal experience the measure and arbiter of divine truth. It is needless to say that the position assumed by the experimentalists, as they prefer to be called, is most unsatisfactory. They have no firm standing ground. There is no common standard of appeal. Each man will have a system of beliefs, more or less comprehensive, of his own. Such men would be more likely to attempt the erection of a modern religious tower of Babel than a Christian temple in which devout souls could reverently and conscientiously worship. It is hardly a matter for surprise that some who have pursued their religious speculations on these lines have wandered into the regions where the chilling mists of scepticism prevail.

One notable experience was that of the keen-minded and subtle critic, Edmond Sherer, who attained eminence as a *litterateur* in Paris and who passed away a few months ago. His career was not