

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN,

— PUBLISHED BY THE —

Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Company

(G. 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 to per line; 1 year, \$1 50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

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MR. WALTER KERR—for many years an esteemed elder of our Church—is the duly authorized agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Kerr in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 1887.

THE membership of the American Presbyterian Church is 680,000. The additions last year were 81,476—52,578 by examination and 28,898 by certificate.

THE American Presbyterian Church holds its Centennial next year at Philadelphia, and part of the celebration is to raise a million dollars for the Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund. And now, just eleven months from that Centennial celebration, we predict the million will be forthcoming.

THE Permanent Committee on Temperance had the following suggestive and timely sentence in their report at the Omaha Assembly:

That it is their firm conviction that all struggles made for righteousness derive their strongest impulse from the living Gospel ministered by the living Church.

Exactly, and a so-called temperance reformer who neither accepts the living Gospel nor attends the living Church is not likely to be animated by very good motives. A man who cares nothing for the God above him has no real regard for the welfare of the men around him.

If the General Assembly decided to meet in one place, it is not at all improbable that the Presbyterians of that place would soon erect an Assembly hall with suitable offices for the officials of the Church. This would be a great convenience not only at Assembly time, but all the year round. A church is not the best kind of building for a large deliberative body to do business in. Some churches are the very worst kind. They are so constructed that it is simply impossible to hear a man speak from certain points. It may be asked what city has Presbyterian people that would build an Assembly hall? The answer is easy—any city in which the Assembly is likely to meet permanently. The Presbyterians of Montreal, Kingston, Toronto or Hamilton would build a hall if shown that it was their duty so to do.

If the Assembly met in one place the billeting system would soon come to an end, and the sooner it comes to an end the better. In any large city, at least half the members would have homes waiting for them. In a city that has a college in it, more than half the members would have homes ready for them. Probably two-thirds of the Presbyterian ministers of Western Ontario have friends in Toronto, with whom they would stay as a matter of course. The same is no doubt true of the localities around Montreal and Kingston. A minister always has any number of friends in the city in which he attended college. In a few years it would not be necessary, to billet any one or at least very few. This alone would be a great improvement. There is no doubt that the billeting system is becoming increasingly distasteful to both residents and visitors. Even people who "take a minister," or elder, sometimes do so, not because they want him, but because they do not like to refuse.

LET those Presbyterians who think that our Methodist friends have more regard for the constituted au-

thorities of their Church than Presbyterians have for theirs, meditate on this illustration. For eleven years after the union of 1875, an agitation was kept up for the union of some of our theological colleges. It was discussed in the press and in the Church courts from every conceivable point of view. At last a committee of representative men was appointed with one of the ablest elders in the Church as Convener. They wrestled with the problem for a year, and finally disagreed on their own report. The General Assembly then took the question up, set apart a special day for threshing it out, the college men and all personally interested wisely stood aside, and one of the liveliest debates ever heard in the Church took place. The Assembly decided that however desirable union might be, it was not practicable, and asked that the agitation cease. From that day down to the present we have not heard a word about union of the colleges. The people let the matter drop at once. Nine months ago, the General Conference decided, after much discussion, to enter the Federation System, and move Victoria to Toronto. It is no secret that opposition to the judgment of the Conference has never ceased. It may not have been very pronounced, but it has existed, and is none the less opposition because it takes the form of a prediction that the money can't be raised. When a Methodist, or any other man, predicts that money cannot be raised for any good purpose, he generally falls from grace long enough to try to fulfil his own prediction.

SOME high-toned lovers of operatic singing in church must have been seriously interfering with our friend of the *Interior*, for he cries out in this way.

Is this really a satisfactorily free country after all? Or are we more or less slaves? A man ought to find liberty in a Protestant Church. But does he? If he thinks he has found it by uniting with the Church, let him try to do some prescribed things in the best way he can, and be cured of the illusion. After reading the divine injunction, "Let all the people praise Thee," let him try to obey it and sing in the Church—with the spirit, if he can't do it with the understanding. He may make melody in his own heart unto the Lord, but he will probably be punched in the ribs, and scowled upon by his neighbours, until he is forced to give up the exercise, or be turned out of church upon a charge of aggravated disorderly conduct. And then he inquires in a melancholy tone if that is the liberty to be expected from the Commonwealth and the Church of Christ. Must a man who wants to obey God by praising Him with song be obliged to go into the woods or the desert to do it?

No, brother, don't go into the woods around Chicago when you want to sing. Come right over here to Canada. This is "a satisfactorily free country" in the matter of singing. Here we coax people to sing in church, and argue with them to convince them that they ought to sing in church, and use various means to promote congregational singing. Come over here, brother, when you want "a good old-fashioned sing." Whether your voice is bass or baritone or tenor, you will get a warm welcome. You may careen up and down the scale. If you cannot make a loud noise skilfully you may just make it loud. Never think of going into the woods or out on the lone prairie when you want to sing.

PERAMBULATING CHURCH COURTS.

THE time will soon come, if it has not already come, when it will be proper to discuss the perambulating system under which our Synods and General Assembly hold their annual meetings. The Assembly has met in Halifax; it is now in session in Winnipeg; it has met in every large city between these extreme points. Practical men are beginning to ask if it is not about time that the supreme court had begun to hold its meetings at one or two points as near the centre of this long country as possible. The question will bear discussion.

We are quite aware that a good deal can be said in favour of the present system. A meeting of the supreme court is a matter of considerable interest to any city. It gives Presbyterianism a lift in the locality in which the court meets. It impresses our people with the dignity, ability and influence of their Church. It does all this, and a great deal more, and yet the question comes up: Would it not promote, in a greater degree, the interest of the Church as a whole to meet annually at some central point?

When the union of '75 took place, there were some reasons in favour of the perambulating system which cannot be urged with so much force now. Many of our Eastern friends had never been in the West, and

it was the most reasonable thing in the world that they should desire to see Ontario. Few Ontario men had visited the Maritime Provinces, and they wished to go to the seaboard, and have a good look at men and things down by the sea. All this is pretty well, even now. Our Maritime friends have come West, they have seen Ontario, visited Niagara Falls, and are now in Winnipeg, which is probably as far West as many of them care to go. Western men have gone East, have seen Halifax and St. John, have sniffed the sea air and enjoyed the luxuries of Maritime hospitality. So far as hospitality is concerned, there could be no better thing than to meet in Halifax or St. John every year. The friends down there entertain right royally, and the only sad day a visitor ever sees in either of these cities is the day he leaves. But the General Assembly does not meet solely that the members may enjoy themselves. It meets to discharge most important duties and the question comes up. Could not these duties be more efficiently discharged, if the Supreme Court met at some central point where all the members could attend with the minimum of inconvenience and expense?

Probably more could be said in favour of meeting in Winnipeg than could be urged in favour of meeting at any point so far away from the centre of our population. The last General Assembly evidently thought it a good thing to meet in the Manitoba Capital. Winnipeg carried by a considerable majority, and a motion to reconsider failed to carry. There was no difficulty last March in finding Presbyterians who were apparently willing to take commissions, but at subsequent meetings of Presbytery, resignations came in like a shower, and a good number, we understand, who held commissions, failed to go at the last moment. The reasons why many either resigned or failed to attend might be condensed into very few words: lack of time and money. The plain hard fact is that, no matter how enthusiastically a General Assembly may vote for Winnipeg, or any other place at one side of our population, when next June comes round the average commissioner cannot afford to spend three weeks, and from \$50 to \$100, on a meeting of the Supreme Court.

INDIVIDUALITY IN CHRISTIAN WORK.

THE great work of Foreign Missionary enterprise has in these days received a mighty impulse. Never since the apostolic age has the Church risen to a sense of its responsibilities, in relation to the binding nature of our Lord's parting command. The heart of the Church is touched more deeply than ever to feel for the perishing in heathen lands. A greater interest is felt, and the progress of the work is watched with more intensity, the mission treasury is receiving more liberal contributions, and young people in larger numbers are consecrating themselves for the service of the Gospel among the heathen. The Church's hope and prayer is that this work may go on deepening and extending until the glorious promises of Scripture are realized, when the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

The no less great work of Home Evangelization is also an ever pressing necessity. The things that remain must ever be strengthened. Every generation has its own special work assigned. However diversified the conditions, there must be a constant holding forth of the Word of Life. The Lord's command is to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. The work is one and the aim is one, that for God's glory, souls may be brought into living and saving relations with Jesus Christ. The Gospel has to deal with the disintegrating forces, now all too visible in all large centres of population. There are influences at work which do not make for righteousness, setting class against class, filling men's hearts with anxiety and apprehension. The mightiest of all forces for mitigating the social and industrial conflict is the Gospel of peace and good will to men. Subsidiary influences are valuable in their place, but as a solvent for human misery and discontent there is none like the Gospel. Important as other remedies may be, they are inadequate, because they cannot do the work which only the Gospel can do. Now, as in apostolic days, the heralds of the cross, whether their field of labour be on the plains of India, among the lapsed masses in the overgrown city, the quiet country village or in the remote Canadian settler's, must feel the burden as did Paul when he said, Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I