

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE

Presbyterian Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd.

AT 5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

Terms, \$2.00 per annum in advance.

ADVERTISING RATES.—Under 3 months, 15 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1.00 per line; 6 months, \$1.75 per line; 1 year, \$3. No advertisement charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

The Canada Presbyterian

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10TH, 1893.

The first duty of every true temperance man is to help to put and keep bogus temperance men on a back seat. The next is to help to swell the majority for prohibition next January until every reasonable man is convinced that a prohibitory law can be enforced.

Some years ago a number of labourers repairing Broadway, New York, dug up an old post with the finger-board still attached. On the finger-board was written the directions, "This way to New York." Looking over Dr. Langtry's lecture on Presbyterianism, one is likely to think of that post.

Can a man who has no regard for God have any real regard for the welfare of his fellow men? If a man hates God and Christ with a carnal mind that in its very essence is enmity against God, can he have any real love for his neighbour? Is it likely that a man who despises Christ cares much for his fellow men?

The attempt to revise the Confession of Faith, made by the American Presbyterian Church, is ending in a failure, we might almost say in a fizzle. Between the conservatives, who wanted no revision, and the radicals, who thought the revision committee did not go far enough, the new confession is left almost without a friend. It has been ground between the upper and nether millstones until there is scarcely anything left but the committee. There never was much reason for undertaking that work anyway.

Now that we are on the eve of another temperance agitation, might it not be well to think of first principles for a little, and fully realize the old-fashioned fact that it is well for a man to be converted himself before he begins to work among others. Can moral reform be carried on successfully by an enemy of God and his Christ? That may seem a very old-fashioned question for this age; but it is suggested by a very old book that some people still recognize as a standard authority on faith and morals.

It is all very well to talk about theological education and popular preaching, and matters of that kind; but when it comes to drawing power, every kind of a preacher has to yield the palm to the escaped nun. When she promises to unfold her alleged experiences of convent life, the bald-headed class leader is sure to be there, and an elder or two may also be seen in the crowd. Even the good old men, who are terribly exercised about the lack of piety in the rising generation, are occasionally seen sitting on Sabbath evenings at the feet of a nun who escaped not from a convent, but from some reformatory institution.

We do not like the boycott, but if there ever was a case in which its use could be justified, the Columbian Exposition is the case. The directors got millions of the people's money on the distinct understanding that the gates should be closed on the Sabbath; but there is too much reason to believe that with the money thus obtained in their till, they are scheming to open the gates. If they do, they will be guilty of a plain, palpable, unmitigated fraud, and honest men could not be blamed for giving the concern a wide berth. Sabbath-breaking is bad enough, but Sabbath-breaking plus ob-

taining money under false pretenses, is quite a sufficient reason for keeping away from the Exposition.

A proposal has been made to take a plebiscite in Scotland on the Established Church, and it is said by those who ought to know that the leaders of the Church have no serious objection to that method of testing the question. They are fair enough to admit that endowment is largely a matter of property, and that the nation has a right to say what it wants to do with its own property. Besides the Home Rule agitation is putting a new face on things. No fair man will deny that if a Protestant minority in Scotland is entitled to State aid in Church matters, a large Catholic majority in Ireland has an equally strong claim.

Read the pessimistic predictions made by certain British statesmen when America gained her independence, by others when the Reform Bills were passed, by others when England became a free trade nation and then say how much importance ought to be attached to the blue ruin talk on Home Rule of such cynics as Balfour and Chamberlain. The very fact that a man poses as a prophet shows that he is consumed with self-conceit or that he thinks his audience is mainly composed of fools. Joseph Chamberlain knows no more about the future than the most illiterate clodhopper in England knows. The dire predictions made when the Presbyterians of Canada united, and the awful calamities solemnly foretold when hymns and organs were allowed, have destroyed all our respect for modern prophets. Professing to have the divine attribute of foreknowledge is a more serious matter than many seem to think.

The Interior touches a point in its last issue which might make disturbers of Churches pause. The Presbyterian Church in and around Chicago is the richest, and gives more than any other to charitable institutions. The institutions that are distinctly Presbyterian have not of late been getting their fair share, and our contemporary attributes the falling off to the bad feeling at present existing in the Church. "Capital shrinks from contention. A wrong impression has been given of the disposition and character of the Church by a few quarrelsome men and newspapers. The great, peaceful, consecrated masses are unseen, while seekers after notoriety and dominance are conspicuous. We know not how it may be in Chicago, or whether the same causes work out the same results in the Church, as a whole, as they do in congregations; but it is a fact that "capital shrinks from contention" in congregational work. Sensible men decline to put their money into a bear garden. It is also a sad fact, that a couple of ecclesiastical bullies contending for notoriety, dominance, or revenge, attract more attention than a hundred quiet Christians at a prayer or missionary meeting. Two bullies who simply want to gratify their own base passions make more noise than a Sunday school and a dozen missionary societies. The bullies bulk largely, and the consecrated masses are not seen or heard. Hence it is, that the bullies come to be looked upon as the congregation, and the congregation is punished for their sins.

It seems to be a foregone conclusion that a majority of the electors of Ontario will vote in favour of prohibition on the first Monday of next January. The only question with many people is the largeness of the majority, and that will depend mainly on the manner in which the campaign is conducted. The decision rests, as it often does, with a large body of electors who stand between the extremes. They are not in favour of the liquor traffic, but are not by any means satisfied that prohibition is the only or best way to put and keep it down. A violent campaign carried on by preachers of doubtful standing; notoriety seekers, who mount every wave; professional hacks, who want to make some money out of the cause; vulgar, insolent fellows, who denounce every citizen that does not shout that he is going to vote for prohibition; sectarian schemers,

who want to manage the campaign so as to bring grist to their mill; infidel lecturers, who profess great regard for their fellow men, though they have none for God; so-called moral reformers, who would drive a coach-and-four through the Fourth Commandment to gather a crowd in their churches on Sunday evening; if these and other characters, unfortunately too well known, are allowed to have much to do with the plebiscite, the majority may easily be so small as to make the successful enforcement of the law an impossibility. The next seven months will be a critical time for the temperance cause. It is all the more critical because so many respectable citizens know how much interest some of the most violent and insolent promoters of the Scott Act have been taking in temperance since that law was repealed.

A BRIEF CRITICISM.

Professor Campbell's address on "The perfect Book, or the perfect Father," (now before us in the "Sunday Afternoon Addresses" in Convocation Hall, Queen's University, Kingston,) is sufficiently startling to merit at least a brief criticism. Our first reading left an impression of unrest. Where are we to land if these things be so? Then came to mind an essay read in our student days upon the art of putting things, and the remembrance that our esteemed professor has a pungent method of stating his convictions, turned us back to a re-reading of the paper, which has led to thoughts, some of which we shall endeavour to express.

Confessions of faith forged out from hard experience and painful research, are in danger of being received traditionally by those who inherit them, as Whittier puts it:—"The living faith of the settlers old. A dead profession their children hold."

It is a good thing to have such traditional faith at times disturbed, that we may be led to follow the good dame's advice and "go over our fundamentals." The address ought thus to stir us up, and is fitted so to do.

But it is legitimate to ask, Are we stirred up in such a manner as to elicit a truthful and trustful spirit? The preceding address in the volume is on "Study and Spiritual Life" by the esteemed Principal of Knox. Does Prof. Campbell's tend to develop the spiritual with the studious? No one can sympathetically read the practical applications, without feeling that the speaker made his utterances with that end in view; there is a fervour and nervous energy in those sentences which can only be honestly thus interpreted. Iconoclastic as some parts may seem, the iconoclast is a constructor. That some presentations are not such as would come from our pen, is true, but then we are not Professor Campbell, and therefore we read them, not as written in our sanctum, but spoken from his professorial chair. Thus read, we think we can understand and profit by them and have our faith confirmed.

His first proposition is most certainly true. We worship God, and hold the saving power of the Book to be nil if it does not lead to Him. "Scripture is a means to an end," this Paul teaches, 2 Tim. 15-17. Hence, the man that uses the Bible to curse his fellow-men and justify all uncharitableness misuses it. The Gospel is in the Book, and the Book for us is divine simply because the Gospel is there.

And Professor Campbell's second thesis is true, though, rejoicing in antitheses, is presented with abruptnesses that jar upon our sensibilities. There are partial presentations of God in the Old Testament, fully justifying the words of the Apostle: "A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth." We can admire the intense patriotism and reverence for the Lord's songs, which with harps hung upon the willows, could pronounce those happy who dashed the little ones of Zion's enemies upon the rock. We would not express the same intense spirit in such strains now. The Old Testament leads up to the New, and the New can scarcely be read without the Old; but the pedagogue leads to Christ, and in His light do we see light. In this case the

Old is not the better, and the old bottles cannot imprison the new wine. Thus far we are agreed.

Where we do differ with our essayist is in the method of presentation; e. g., we would not say that "The prevailing Old Testament notion concerning God was that of an Oriental monarch, subject to no law ruling absolutely, etc." We would the rather say that the language and thought of the day permitted of no other manner of expression; "Jupiter pater" is a very different conception from that contained in "Pater noster;" we have read Christ's love into the latter, and when we are permitted to read the same into those older Hebrew presentations, we do stand upon a vantage ground which the prophets desired, but attained not thereunto. We might have wished that our friend's presentation had been less startling, but the lessons he would teach we would do well to learn.

QUITE A DIFFERENCE.

In his address given a few weeks ago at the close of the session to the Knox College students and friends, Principal MacVicar drew attention to a distinction frequently overlooked. The terms of admission to simple fellowship in the Church, is one thing, the Church endorsement of one offering to teach is altogether another. There may be in the one case an honest endeavour to embrace within the fellowship all who acknowledge Jesus as Lord, but as our American brethren put it, it is necessary that all who are admitted as teachers must be sound in the faith. This much is most surely required by the instructions of Paul to Timothy and to Titus.

Soundness in the faith certainly implies a standard; when all vagaries of opinion point to "The Word" as the ground of their special faith, will it do to say, let the Scripture be the only standard? In our present distracted condition there is needed some declaration as to the meaning of those Scriptures, for from the Pope to the last remnant of the Brethren, all rest their claim of infallibility upon some truths endorsed in Scripture texts. It may be, most probably is, that the Westminster Confession with all its acknowledged merits, would not be in its present form, the standard of the various Churches who receive it, were it now to be accepted for the first time; nor does any Church of the day exact a detailed acceptance of all the statements. Both in the matter of the relation of the Church to the Magistrate, and in regard to degrees of affinity conditioning the marriage relation, our own Church has avowed liberty as to its utterances; and on its extreme words, which appear to limit the mercy of God, there is a general consensus that in accepting, 'the system of doctrine' is that which is meant. But there is a system of doctrine, and when that system of doctrine is accepted by a candidate for licensure, honesty demands that regard should be had to the sense in which the promisee understands that system, rather than to the mental reservation of the promiser. It is utterly subversive of all good faith for one to make a pledge in a sense which would be distinctly repudiated by the party to whom this pledge is given. How far a Christian Church should go in exacting detailed statements is a question we are not at this present dealing with, but with the recognized fact that at present dominates all organizations, that a Church, whether, as among the Independents comprising a single congregation, or as in our own, embracing congregations that dot a continent, declares the terms of admission to its communion, whether of member or of teacher; nor can it be otherwise, so far as we can see, for even an Agnostic Club will posit a denial, if nothing else.

Now, what should be the position of a man who consciously has departed from his original pledge, honestly given? Certainly, if he desires on his part the relation to continue, to state to the other party to the contract, that he has changed his convictions. If the Church assents to the changed condition, well; if not, separation must come. The man may be right, the Church may be wrong.