

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH ACTION.

PSALM CXXVII—1.—“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it ; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”

We are engaged in building a great house. We are occupied in watching over the interests of a rapidly growing city. We meet as the Provincial Synod of Rupert's Land—the representative of the grand old historic Church of England in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Pause, my brethren ; think for a moment what this assembly is, and what a sphere of action lies before it. It is the chief Synod of England's church in this country—that true portion of the Church catholic adhering faithfully to the oldest forms of government and worship, holding fast by the unchanging truths of the everlasting gospel, as embodied in creeds agreed upon by the undisputed general councils ; thus maintaining its union through the blessed memories of more than 1800 years with Christ's faithful followers of all ages and countries up to apostolic times. Such is the church that this Provincial Synod represents. And what shall I say of the sphere of action that God in His Providence has assigned to it ? My mind shrinks back appalled at the greatness of the work—the vastness of the responsibility. I flee for refuge to the words of my text. I hide myself under the shadow of God's Almighty power. We build, but God is the real builder. We are but instruments in His hands. We watch, but our eyes are often heavy with sleep. How blessed then the words, “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” The sphere of labor, how wonderful it is ! Manitoba, that but a few years ago, was a great untrodden waste,—its boundless prairies one vast sea of grass, that often, when summer heats had done their work, became a sea of fire, is already the home of a great population. Towns and cities have sprung up within its bounds with a rapidity that far outstrips anything yet experienced in the history of England's colonies. And these vast territories of Assiniboia, and Saskatchewan, and Alberta, and Athabasca ; what of them ? Do you doubt the certain splendor of their future ? Onward toward