

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1883.

GRADUATES of Toronto University are showing commendable zeal in the welfare of their Alma Mater. Its thorough equipment is desirable. Being the cornerstone of the educational system of Ontario it ought to be put in a position to do the very best work possible. Appeals have been made to the affection and gratitude of graduates of the institution; but to these appeals no material response has as yet been reported. Meetings have been held in various places by alumni of University College, and the sentiment expressed at all such gatherings has been decidedly favourable to further governmental aid.

WITH creditable chivalry the "Globe" reiterates its proposal for placing one or two ladies by acclamation on the Toronto School Board. Scotch-like it answers the question "Why, by acclamation?"—by asking another—why not? Both the "Globe" and the genial "Lindsay Post" try to get around the why, by imputing to THE PRESBYTERIAN a special fondness for the evil custom of canvassing, etc. The imputation is not even founded on fact. The disappearance of canvassing and a good many other customs from our political life would not cause us passionate grief. In Britain where ladies sit at the school boards they are not as a general rule elected by acclamation. They accept the conditions of time and chance. Several years ago Mrs. Elizabeth Cary Stanton appealed for election to the United States Presidency. It is not recorded that she was elected either by acclamation or the ballot box.

WE came across a paper the other day written some years ago by Dr. John Hall, on short pastorates and one of the causes which make them short, so immitably good that we cannot forbear giving the principal points to our readers. Every word weighs a ton. *Insecurity of tenure*, Dr. Hall says, is one cause of the scarcity of ministers:—

Among the many reasons why an inefficient number of men educate themselves—i. e., at their own expense—is not the *insecurity of tenure* one leading cause? Parents often give the bias to the boy's mind that determines his profession. Have they never misgivings as to the future of their son if he became a minister founded on what they observe in the history of clergymen? Boys themselves, at the age of fifteen to twenty—when a life of life is selected—are no longer children. They see, hear, observe and reflect. Do they never see changes effected with none too much regard to the feelings and the prospects of ministers, which check any just ambition they might have indulged to be preachers of the Gospel?

True as steel writ every word of it. Can the boys who are turned out of the manse for no cause or probably because their father dared to do his duty be expected to look with a very friendly eye on their father's profession? They would not be human if they did. A good man who sees his minister driven out of his charge at the bidding of a few cranks be reasonably expected to put his own son into the ministry? To do so both father and son would require a great deal more than an average amount of grace.

We do not deny, for a moment, that a ministerial settlement is something in the nature of a contract and that both parties have rights as to its dissolution. But we deny that it is a simple contract. The Presbytery installs, or the Bishop institutes, or the Council settles. There is a third party consulted and deferred to in one form or other, according to the constitution of Christian communities. That third party represents some interest. Is it not that of the

Church, in its wider sense; or, in the last resort, does it not represent Christ? Does not the true settlement of a true minister authorize him to say:—"The Lord has put me here," in some different sense from that in which a pious man in a banking concern or a railway company could truly say:—"The Lord has put me here?"

At inductions ministers say quite often in their prayers and addresses:—"The Lord is putting this man here," but when the pastoral tie is being ruptured often for little or no cause they seem too often to forget that the Lord has anything to do with it.

Now that the minister is "placed," ought his removal to be a matter of simple choice on the side of one of the parties? Should it be competent to them to say:—"We choose you should go?" Is the third party a real party or only a decent form? Ought not the minister to be entitled to say:—"Produce your reasons for this suggestion, not to me; for I am not fit to be judge in my own cause; but to the third party to which we both—you and I—deferred, in ratifying this contract?"

The third party is too often only a "decent form" and nothing more. Sometimes barely a form. The real work that causes dissolution of the pastoral tie is usually done before the "third party" knows anything about it and often done by parties who have not the moral courage to appear before the "third party."

Now let us see what sometimes happens. A minister is too zealous for the standard of some of the parish, or too "cold," for that of others. There are reforms in progress which he does not feel he has a call to push; and the reformers, whose pet scheme renders them great men, besides aiming at the regulation of the sidereal system generally "regret" that he is not with them. He disliked something at the church fair; he lacked tact in keeping some "strong" man or woman in the church; in fact he did not do what some thought he would have done, or he did something they did not expect him to do and they think a change desirable. Yes, he did not work with some "escaped nun," or "converted Jew," or bogus "monk," or wandering spouter of some kind who got "into trouble" very soon afterwards, and the "great men" who were great only for a little time agitated for a change.

Among all the glorious possibilities of the future who can tell what they may get. They all know just what they have. The actual incumbent is prose; the possible successor is all poetry, is smart as Mr. —, as eloquent as Dr. —, as learned as a college president, as agreeable as an insurance agent when canvassing, and as handsome as a hotel clerk.

A real live insurance agent might perhaps meet the wants of the situation better than an honest Gospel minister.

So a few persons begin to talk, drop hints, remark on the slim attendance, wonder why there is no interest in the church, predict a falling off in the finances, button up their pockets, fulfil their own prophecies, and then announce that it appears the will of Providence that Brother Faithful should take another field. Brother Faithful is a Christian and a gentleman, a little sensitive, unused to combat, accustomed to say on his knees, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" and, though with a confused sense of something hardly just, he offers his resignation; the "church" passes kindly resolutions; and Brother Faithful, with a good deal of the spring taken out of his life, goes forth, in one respect like Abraham and the church goes forth in quest of its imaginary perfect man, to disturb perhaps the peace and security of half a dozen other churches before it is settled again. We say deliberately, that these things are often done; and, what is worse, done by the most vulgar-minded and unspiritual of a congregation.

Done, yes Doctor, they are often done, but it is drawing it rather mild to say they are done by "the most vulgar minded and unspiritual of the congregations." The "few persons" who act thus are often detected soon afterwards in gross and open sin, sometimes in the commission of crimes. If such cases could be investigated with some such effective machinery as an election court it would be found that the chief actors are often not only "vulgar and unspiritual"—they are not unfrequently men notorious in their own locality for want of ordinary honesty. If the true inwardness of such cases could be laid bare as the "corrupt practices" of elections are laid bare by legal machinery that mercilessly unmasks wrong-doing, probably the churches would spend less time in bewailing the corruption of practical life and give more attention to their own affairs.

Such a process grieves, we must hold, the Holy Ghost, hurts and alienates even natural feeling where it is commonly refined, and is fitted to repel that order of mind which it would be most desirable to have consecrated to the work of the ministry.

True, but the people who engage in that kind of work—fortunately few in number, though the many often suffer by their doings, don't care whether the Spirit is grieved or not, and as for "natural feeling" they don't know what it is.

## THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE CONSOLIDATION.

A QUESTION of great importance and of growing interest presses for earnest consideration at the present time. Canadians have not been indifferent to the claims of education. It has been their boast that all ought to receive a primary training and the pupils who discover sufficient aptitude should have every facility for obtaining an academic training. There has been an unhappy difference of opinion as to whether the State or the various denominations ought to supply the higher education. As a result of divergent views we have both provincial and denominational colleges. The question is likely to be agitated afresh with more or less keenness at the present time.

One thing, however, is universally conceded. The theological training of the future ministry of the Christian Church must be by the voluntary effort of the respective denominations. Many hold that this is their chief if not their only legitimate educational function.

The opinion is now more generally entertained than ever before that those who aspire to the office of the sacred ministry should be thoroughly educated men. Every branch of the evangelical Church is anxious to secure for those who consecrate themselves to the noble work of preaching the Gospel the best education possible.

The record of the Presbyterian Church, wherever it has existed, is clear on the matter. It has been its uniform endeavour to obtain a learned ministry. The history of Presbyterianism in Canada is no exception to the uniform practice. Her theological institutions have been humble enough in their origin, but they have not been content to remain in a rudimentary condition. They have grown with the age.

And now it is a question with many whether there has not been too great haste in the extension of this important part of the Church's work. There is a strong latent conviction that in this department, a burden unnecessarily heavy has been imposed. This conviction is, from time to time, striving for utterance.

It is a question claiming earnest, serious and wise consideration. It is easy to poke fun at the stately buildings erected, and the comparatively small number of students attending our theological halls. The subject is too grave for flippant epigrams more or less brilliant. It demands the conscientious study of the ablest minds in the Church.

In the consideration of what the present duty of the Church is in relation to her theological institutions many things have to be taken into account. How do we come to have so many theological colleges? Are they not more than commensurate with the present resources and wants of the Church? Is not their existence in a large measure the growth of past compromise? Did not the accomplishment of union necessitate the present condition of affairs in respect to colleges? These and other questions have to be considered carefully and dispassionately. They cannot in fairness be overlooked. It will not tend to a just and wise solution of existing problems to stir the ashes of all but extinct sectarian animosities. If the condition of our theological institutions is not yet up for discussion it soon will be. The whole question, in its relation to the true prosperity of the Church, must be approached in a calm Christian spirit, with no overweening desire to gain a sectional triumph; but, on the broadest principles of charity, to consider what is best, not in the special interest of this or that existing institution, but for the best interests of the Church as a whole.

The one broad question that suggests itself in view of existing restiveness under present burdens is, could not a comprehensive scheme of consolidation be devised, resulting in unity of effort instead of apparent rivalry, and concentration of resource in the efficient maintenance of our theological institutions? There are strong arguments why some such plan ought to be adopted. The various theological colleges of the Church, it is generally conceded, have done valuable work in the past and are now doing still more efficient work at the present time. Each of them has a faculty enjoying the confidence of the Church and students alike. Yet all of them would hail with satisfaction important additions to their teaching faculties, but their straitened means have hitherto denied such desirable additions. By co-operation instead of unnecessary competition, could not these deficiencies be supplied