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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5th, 1890.

Presbyterian Lesson Scheme for 1890.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO., (LTD).
JORDAN STREET, TORONTO.

REFERRING to the prolonged debate in the New York Presbytery on Revision, the *Interior* says:

They are having an "illigant toime" in the Presbytery of New York. Preachers and elders are moulded out of the same clay with other men. There is something quite exhilarating in exhibitions of that kind of science.

There may be but when it is remembered that the report of the debate in one of the leading journals is headed "Debate on Damnation," one cannot help asking whether the exhilaration is wholesome. If all men were Christians, or, if not Christians, had common sense, and if all newspapers would report ecclesiastical debates without spicing their reports with blasphemy, a good discussion would be a good thing. As matters stand a debate even by giants like John Hall is always made to serve some evil purpose.

A STUDENT named Covel applied to the American Board for mission work in the foreign field. He held the second probation theory in a modified kind of way and his application revived the old controversy and did no small amount of harm. When the harm was done he withdrew his application. It appears the young man is not near the end of his college course and for anything anybody knows to the contrary may be plucked half a dozen times before he is licensed to preach. The *Christian-at-Work* is of the opinion that it would be better if young men in the seminaries would attend to their studies and apply for work when they are ready to do it. Undoubtedly it would. The spectacle of a body like the American Board contending over a youth who might get plucked at his next examination is not for edification. But the young man has got no small amount of notoriety and perhaps that was what he wanted.

DR. CUYLER winds up an article on "Cruelty to Ministers" in the following vigorous style:

The average Presbyterian minister is not an angel from heaven; for angels pay no baker's bills. He is not the "just man made perfect" with the eloquence of a Spurgeon and the genius of a Bushnell. He is simply an earnest, God-fearing messenger of the Word of Life, who has consecrated all his gifts, such as they are, to the work of saving souls and serving his Master. To pick flaws in his conduct, level captious criticisms at his preaching, sow dissatisfaction among his flock, wear out his patience, and destroy his usefulness, and then turn him and his wife and children out of a home, with not even a "raven" to bring them bread—all this is a heartless barbarity that ought never to disgrace a church that wears the proud name of Presbyterian.

Such heartless barbarity does too frequently disgrace the Church that wears this proud name. The name won't do much good if the people that wear it act as the veteran doctor describes. Alexander the Great once said to a soldier and a namesake who behaved badly, "Sir, you must change your conduct or change your name." The same might be said to some people who glory in being called Presbyterians. The glorification may be a good thing for them but it is hard on Presbyterianism. Somebody should ask them to change their conduct or change their church.

DR. BEHREND'S gives the Yale course this session. His opening lecture—published in the *Christian-at-Work*—has some capital points. The theory that the press was taking the place of the pulpit was brushed aside by the hard fact that in the Middle Ages, before the art of printing was discovered, there was almost no preaching at all,

but now, when printing is universal, there is more preaching than ever. Another point may be of some interest to a number of people in Ontario at the present time. There is almost no preaching in the Church of Rome. The sermon is crowded out by the service. The ritual overshadows everything. Protestants who clamour for short sermons are, in so far as they clamour, drifting towards Rome. Men who wish to make the service everything and the sermon nothing are on the way Romeward. That is a view of the short sermon question which we venture to say has never occurred to some people who consider themselves excellent Protestants. We wonder if any of the Equal Rights people have a leaning towards Rome in the matter of sermons. More things point towards Rome than the Jesuits' Estates Bill.

MR MULOCK'S loyalty resolution in the House of Commons was timely and he moved it in a manly, dignified speech. The temptation to indulge in some big talk about the Crown and Constitution and the British lion, etc., was strong, but the member for North York resisted it like a gentleman and a scholar—both of which he is. The other speeches were entirely free from swagger and on the whole the resolution could not have been better nor could it have been put through in better taste. Of course it is not necessary to assure the Queen that Canadians are loyal, but there may be some people who labour under the delusion that Canada is ripe for Annexation and it is just as well that they should know the facts. The facts are that very few Canadians desire Annexation and of these few not a baker's dozen in any county have the courage to avow their sentiments. Whilst the number who desire Annexation on even honourable terms is small, the number who could be driven into political union with our excellent neighbours might be counted on one's fingers. The man who says, "Pinch them commercially and they will pull down their flag," either does not know Canadians or he basely slanders the Canadian people.

ONE of the most serious dangers that threatens Canada at the present time is the delusion that material prosperity depends mainly on political considerations. This delusion always becomes rampant in a time of depression. When business is dull and money scarce too many people are ready to listen to any demagogue and to catch at any straw. Whatever depression exists in Ontario at the present time was produced mainly by four causes—a short harvest, unseasonable weather, low prices for produce and the influenza epidemic. Would Imperial Federation have produced one more turnip than grew under Confederation? Would Annexation have given us one inch of snow? Would Independence have raised the price of wheat one cent or have kept "la grippe" from our family. If all the orators and all the journals that are recommending some political "fad" as a sovereign remedy for national ills would try to teach the people that prosperity depends mainly on the exercise of such old-fashioned virtues as economy, industry, pluck, thrift and plodding self-denial, Canada would soon become a great country. But that kind of thing would not be popular. Men never cheer when you ask them to work, or drink less liquor, or wear their old coats until they can afford to pay for new ones.

THINGS are lively again at the old "ramshackle" pile on Front street. Our local legislators are assembled, some of them probably for the last time, and for the next two months the assembled wisdom of Ontario will give the people good laws. Truth to say this Ontario Parliament is composed for the most part of excellent men—energetic, sensible, patriotic men—men of whom any country in the world might be proud. There may not be as many brilliant men among them as there was in the first parliament after confederation, but the absence of brilliance is more than atoned for by the presence of good sense and solid worth. There has not been one scandal even hinted at since they met in 1887. So far the record is clean. The most critical time, however, is yet to come. This is the last session and the temptation to manufacture capital for the coming contest, at a last session, is always strong. Our advice to the assembled wisdom would be—"Gentlemen, go to the country on some distinct lines of public policy and don't begin to blacken each other's character before you go to the polls." As a matter of mere party tactics, not to go higher, this advice is sound, for the history of the country does show that assailing a man's character rarely hurts his chance for re-election. Besides the practice is very demoralizing to the public. It leads peo-

ple to think that every public man is a rascal while the great majority of them are quite as good as their constituents.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS.

FOR several weeks our columns have contained condensed notices of annual congregational meetings, and many more such notices have yet to be published. They will appear as speedily as space will permit. There may be much similarity in the general tenor of these brief notices of congregational history. They have much in common and much that calls for unaffected gratitude. These records of congregational life and progress indicate that in the management of their affairs there is much more care and system than could be found in the earlier business methods of what are now prosperous and influential congregations. Many of the reports state that the attendance at these annual meetings was generally encouraging. This would justify the inference that there is a creditable increase of interest in congregational welfare, and that is something that speaks well for the future. Various excuses have been urged for the large measure of apathy which many have had only too good reason to deplore in the past. How often has it been that barely a quorum have assembled, after repeated announcement, to make the appointments and transact the year's congregational business? Is it matter for surprise that the entire work was left in the hands of a few who might or who might not be best fitted for the responsibilities that the neglect of others imposed on them? A generally diffused interest in all that belongs to the congregation's welfare is much to be desired. Division in work and reasonably frequent changes in office tend to promote a healthy pulsation of congregational life, and prevent that stagnation that inevitably follows the appointment, year after year, of the same individuals to the same offices; it also removes the ground for the excuse that confining the management of the various branches of congregational work to a narrow and select circle is sure to awaken murmurings and disputings in certain minds.

Another gratifying feature of these congregational reports is that they are invariably able to record a perceptible advance. This advance is noticeable in those departments where progress means much. Many during the past year have had reason to complain of adverse circumstances, and not a few have been in a position to know that these complaints were not altogether unfounded. Notwithstanding, the Church has not been the first to suffer. In most cases the ordinary revenue has increased; in some there may have been deficits, but they are small and give no occasion for apprehension. It is also gratifying to notice that in several instances where increased congregational prosperity has been experienced, congregations have, unsolicited, made substantial additions to their pastor's salary. It is well when a people whom God has blessed with material prosperity are large-hearted enough to share it, in a measure, with those who minister to them in sacred things. It is not well when a people who have prospered pecuniarily permit their minister to maintain the struggle on the slender pittance with which he began his work, when all were alike comparatively poor. Even ministers are human; the best of them cannot be expected to escape seasons of discouragement, especially when they have reason to believe that their struggles are largely owing to the thoughtlessness or illiberality of those who could do much better if they tried.

The growing interest in missionary effort is apparent in all the congregations. Contributions show an upward tendency, and this like charity will prove a double blessing. In the direct effort to help others good will be done, and the givers themselves will be spiritually richer because of their gifts. There has been a larger degree of individual activity in Christian work throughout the Church. In this department no congregation—not even the most active and best organized—but must say, "I have not yet attained, neither am I already perfect." There is indefinite room for advancement along this most important line of practical Christianity.

Gratifying as the reports generally are, and affording as they do ample reason for thanksgiving to the great Head of the Church for His mercy, there is no room for boasting. Nothing is more hurtful to spiritual life and progress than a self-satisfied complacency in what has been accomplished. Outward prosperity alone is no sure index of a high state of spiritual vitality. The Church must grow upwardly as well as outwardly. For this end every faithful member of the Church will pray for a new and larger baptism of the Holy Spirit that through their instrumentality God's "way may be known upon earth and His saving health among all nations."