

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1882.

It is with deep regret that we record this week the death of Mrs. Dr. Burns, of this city. An extended notice will appear in our next issue.

APPROPRIATE reference was made in St. James Square Presbyterian Church, Toronto, by the Rev. Dr. King, in the morning service on Sabbath last, to the loss sustained by the congregation and by the city in the sudden removal of Mrs. Burns, and to the important service rendered by her during a long life to the cause of Christ. The evening service was fittingly conducted by the Rev. Dr. Burns, of Halifax.

AN Evangelist of some note, at present labouring in the south-western States, used the following choice language in Dayton, Ohio, in a sermon on the Parable of the Prodigal Son:—

"Right straight from the swine's trough to the best robe suits the Lord best, fleas and all, stench and rags and all, poverty and all, and withal ignorance to cap the climax." Wonder if any of the people went home saying they never heard the Gospel before.

THE time for agricultural shows has about come. The voice of the gambler who erects his stand near the gate, and offers to allow you make ten dollars out of five or ten cents, will soon be heard in the land. The groundling who gets rid of his money in this way will soon be heard giving lectures on the "awful wickedness" of the gambler. Between the sordid groundling who tries to get ten dollars without giving value for it, and the gambler who fleeces him, there is nothing to choose morally. The one is as bad as the other.

THE disturber who worries a minister inflicts an injury upon the congregation to which the minister preaches. The minister sits down to prepare his sermon. The moment he begins to think, the thing about which he worries comes into his mind. It is all very well to say he should banish such things from his mind when preparing sermons. Can he? He may honestly try to do so, but the very effort to banish them keeps his mind from his preparation. Hundreds of sermons are spoilt in this way. Very hardened "scalawags" not unfrequently worry ministers so that they may find fault with the sermons the preparation of which they themselves intentionally spoilt. The men who act thus are efficient agents of the devil and there are such men in the Presbyterian Church. The Almighty will call them to account some day.

A CINCINNATI clergyman preached a sermon on lawyers lately, and said some very uncomplimentary things about the gentlemen of the long robe. The clerical editor of a Presbyterian journal came promptly to the defence of the profession, and prefaced his article by saying that he himself had practised for years before going into the ministry, and had known many eminent Christian lawyers. All this talk about men being good or bad is nonsense. Lawyers are like other men—some are good, some are bad, and some are very indifferent. Considering the immense responsibilities that rest upon lawyers in large practice, the amount of temptation to which they are exposed, and their opportunities for wrongdoing, perhaps they are above rather than below the average business man in point of honour. However, discussing men in classes is nonsense. There are good and bad men in every walk in life. Men should be judged as individuals.

"IRENÆUS," in his last published letter in the New York "Observer," says:

"I do not like the *lingo* of the Salvation Army. To me their talk is irreverent, profane, and slangy. I would as soon curse and swear as Peter did, and to speak of Jesus Christ as some of these men do. And so in these revival meetings, even in what are called holiness meetings, there are things said and done that offend and sometimes shock my sense of propriety. But who am I that I should say the Lord will not use these very words to touch and impress others who are not of the same fibre and habit with me. This is not to say that all ways are good ways, or that one is as good as another."

As a generic term for the peculiar utterances of Salvation Army orators *lingo* "can't be beat." It is the very word that the newspaper paragraphers have been hunting for and could not find. That is what has been the matter with them. Now they can thank "Irenæus" and go ahead. Seriously, however, the good old man deserves thanks not only for his word, but for the sensible, manly and charitable verdict in which he has given it a place.

SOME of the secular journals across the lines are raising the annual cry about vacant pulpits during the usual ministerial vacation. The interest that these journals take in preaching is something positively marvellous. The most curious thing about the whole affair is that the cry comes from men who never darken a church door. The most of them don't believe one word in a thousand that a minister says in a sermon—they don't believe in churches, or the Sabbath, or preaching, and yet they raise an annual cry when a few city churches are closed! They say the devil never stops working, and furnish a good illustration of the fact. The truth of the matter is, this annual bray about ministerial holidays is simply another way of showing the well-known hatred of such rascals to the ministry, because ministers preach the Gospel. We have seen some symptoms of the disease in Canada lately. When it takes a pronounced form, we may be relied on to unmask the assailants, and we venture the prediction that there will not be a church-going man found among them.

## THE MORALITY CURRENT AMONG US.

WE believe that, on the whole, the tone of morality both in Europe and America is steadily, if not rapidly, rising. The oft-repeated complaints of youthful depravity, political corruption, crimes through drunkenness, the social evil, irreverence and disregard of laws, may be regarded as the outcry of society, as it is awakened to realize the immorality that was long cherished without any feeling of alarm or disapprobation. The publishing in loathsome detail of crimes and sayings of criminals, pleasing though it may be to the prurient taste of a small class, is condemned by the better portion of the community. It is a shame to speak of those deeds of darkness. To unravel the mysteries of crime in the court-room is necessary, but to publish them where they meet the eye of our youth in the family journal is an offence against society. A paper may sell the better for containing "a scandal, a horror, or a sensation," but the journalist who spreads the contagion by exposing the disgusting nakedness of crime offends against public morality. Whether the familiarity with crime which follows reading these accounts is the cause or not, it seems undeniable that fear of the consequences of immorality is decreasing. Society is becoming more tolerant than it was of blasphemy, irreverence, Sabbath desecration—even of murder, unchastity, dishonesty and falsehood. To denounce these offences, as used to be done, would be resented as puritanic and what not. Public sentiment is now less severe than it was wont to be. Believing this to be the case, we have to look in the face the morality which now prevails.

Mr. Herbert Spencer tells us, "Now that moral injunctions are losing the authority given by their supposed sacred origin, the secularization of morals is becoming imperative," in other words, men are beginning to lose their faith in God and Divine revelation; and to deny their responsibility to Him for their conduct. So, as Mr. Spencer considers that "Few things can happen more disastrous than the decay and death of a regulative system no longer fit, before another and fitter regulative system has grown up to replace it," he has written a book by which he hopes "the vacuum may be filled." It is only necessary to say that that book is one very hard to read, from which "the many" can receive no instruction, and that the "regulative" principle which he proposes is an *ignis fatuus*,

even on his own showing—a something as yet unrealized and unrealizable in the present state of society.

With this theory we have nothing to do; but we are not sure but the fruits of the theory are to be seen in the state of morality to which reference has been made, and which is incurring the censure even of our ordinary newspapers.

For example, how often, when we admonish any one as to the omission of some duty, do we receive in answer, "I have not got to"—meaning, I am not obliged by any superior force to perform that duty. If the duty *must* be performed, the man will submit to the inevitable, and under compulsion do his duty. But if left to the influence of other and higher motives than compulsion and fear, the duty is neglected. If the thief *cannot* steal he will be honest, because "he has got to." Under the Scott Act the drunkard "has got to" practise sobriety. With an efficient officer the rogue "has got to" pay the duty. Surely in such cases there is no morality. The thief, the drunkard, the rogue, are immoral, although they *cannot* do immoral acts. The man who does his duty only because he "has got to," will never deny himself from a sense of duty. Nay, he is the craven-hearted coward that yields to force; and when he "has got to," or suffers, lies or shares the plunder, or commit perjury, or denies God and righteousness. Nobility and heroism cannot grow in this soil.

Another, when urged to duty, replies, "What's the use?" If such a man can make gain by *seeming* to be moral, he will act morally, for "It is of use." If he can make money by doing right and speaking truth, he will do so. If he can gain honour or favour by kindness and goodness, he will be kind and good—in appearance at least. But, on the other hand, if he can get money, or position, or honour without honesty, truth and goodness, "what's the use" of being honest, true and good? A sharp trick in business; a political lie; an examination fraud; an unkind violation of friendship is justifiable in the eyes of such men if it "is of use." A man who becomes moral when righteousness pays, will become immoral when he thinks that unrighteousness pays better.

A third man, when urged to duty, tells you "there is no enjoyment in doing it." Therefore he refuses. It is the fashion nowadays to set forth the pleasure accompanying religion, temperance, and good living generally as the reason for being moral. "You know you will be a happier man if you are religious and moral." Hence the rage for religious and moral amusements and entertaining religions. "Please men" we are told; "make religion and temperance enjoyable; do not repel men by puritanic strictness of morals." But surely there is a mistake here also. The man who professes to love God, and do his duty, on account of the pleasure it affords him, will certainly serve Satan and do wickedness if he comes to think that there is more pleasure to be had by so doing. The man that does not drink, and attends religious meetings for the sake of the pleasure that is connected with temperance and religion, will quaff the wine-cup, frequent the bar-room, be found amidst scenes of revelry, attend the dance and theatre as soon as he is persuaded that there is more pleasure to be had in these things. Coax men to be religious. Make them moral by enjoyment! Never; it is impossible. The man who makes pleasure his chief end is immoral quite as much as the man who makes money or honour his god, or as the man that yields to force, and, coward-like, obeys man rather than God. In no such way can the noble character be produced that says, "How shall I do this wickedness and sin against God? Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." And what are these? Jur the old-fashioned notions of right and duty: Love God and fear Him; love your neighbour and do him good. Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God. When conscience speaks, obey it, when God speaks, obey Him. Do right because it is right; do your duty because you ought. Do not ask questions as to the consequences of right doing, but for God's sake do right. Dare to be true, just, and kind. If we can teach our children this morality—this fear of God, we shall have a nation of freemen, brave, generous, and noble. They will not yield to brute force, nor meekly submit to wrong-doing for the sake of gain or pleasure. They will be beyond the power alike of the ruthless tyrant that would crush down opposition, and of the mean cheat that would debauch mar-