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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 1887.

THE remarkable success attending the operations of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society suggests the query, Why was it not thought of sooner? It is only a few years since the movement began in the Canadian Church. For a young institution it has attained remarkable strength and activity. The eleventh annual meeting began yesterday in Old St. Andrew's Church, and the reports submitted are of the most encouraging character. This consecrated agency for the diffusion of the Gospel in heathen lands has evidently a noble work and a grand future before it.

THE theory that none are within the Church but communicants—a very convenient one for indolent, careless elders and ministers. The number on the communion roll is much smaller than the number of worshippers connected with any congregation. If nobody should be looked after particularly but members in full communion, then the duties of a teaching and ruling elder become necessarily circumscribed. An entirely different face is put on the whole matter, if a Session acts on the theory that every young man and woman—yes, every boy and girl in the congregation—is under the spiritual care of the Session. This is the true theory—the theory on which every Session should proceed. No doubt the practice of this theory would involve a great deal of work, but work is the very thing wanted. Work is what the Church needs and what the young people need. If the object of a minister, or other spiritual office-bearer in the Church, is to save labour, his best plan is to save it all by not undertaking to do anything. A thorough recognition of the fact that everybody connected with a Presbyterian congregation is under the spiritual oversight of the Session, and that every member of Session, by his ordination vows, is bound to exercise such oversight in spiritual things, would make a revolution in many congregations. If our own theory of the Church and of baptism were properly carried out by the Session, in all our congregations, we would not hear so much about the necessity of having evangelists and other outside help.

A DEPUTATION from the Presbytery of Barrie waited upon the Attorney-General last week for the purpose of discussing the existing arrangement for supplying religious instruction to the inmates of the Reformatory at Penetanguishene. The deputation was most courteously received by the Premier, who expressed his pleasure at having an opportunity to discuss the matter. The object of the Government explained by the Premier, is to have constant moral and religious supervision of the inmates. Such supervision, it is believed by the Government, can be better secured by the services of a resident chaplain than in any other way. The chaplain is expected not only to give religious instruction to the boys, but also to discharge toward them the duties of a parent, or moral guardian, so far as the discharge of such duties is possible. It goes without saying that if there is to be a chaplain at all he must belong to some religious denomination. An arrangement may probably be made by which the resident ministers may supplement the labours of the chaplain, and give religious instruction

to the inmates that belong to their own denominations. If the Government aim at constant moral and religious supervision of the inmates, instead of occasional religious services, as in the case of such institutions as the Central Prison, there is much to be said in favour of a resident chaplaincy. The representatives of other denominations should, however, have free access to the Reformatory, and an opportunity should be afforded them of giving regular religious instruction to such of the inmates as belong to their denominations. Into an arrangement of this kind we have no doubt the Government would enter heartily, and we are certain the resident ministers of Penetanguishene will willingly do their part.

THE advantage of having humane, Christian gentlemen on the Bench may be seen by the following paragraph from a judgment delivered the other day by Mr. Justice Rose. We know nothing about the merits of the case under consideration nor with what amount of force, if any, his Lordship's words apply to it. His Honour said:

The tendency of modern legislation seems to have been in the direction of recognizing that it is not in the interest of society that a debtor and his family should be deprived of all means of subsistence, even for the purpose of paying an honest debt. Great want, misery and a terrible temptation to crime often follow hard upon the heels of an officer of the law set in motion by a creditor who is careless of what may follow, provided his debt is paid, and he is not personally disturbed by witnessing the suffering caused thereby. Our Legislatures pass laws to relieve the honest and unfortunate, even though they sometimes afford a shelter for the improvident and dishonest, and I venture the opinion that no good end is served by any law which permits the officers to turn upon the street helpless women and children without food or shelter. The cruelties of the debtors' prison are rapidly becoming things of the past—it may be the next generation will view the exercise of some of the powers now existing to enforce the payment of debts from the suffering poor as no less cruel.

Of course an honest debt ought to be paid if possible, but, as the judge observes, turning helpless women and children upon the street without food and shelter, while the head of the family may be tempted to commit crime, is often a greater evil to society than the failure to pay the debt. Laws are made for the well-being of society as a whole as well as for the protection of creditors. The changes that are being made in the law in regard to distress for rent by the Local Legislature at the present time are a good illustration of the present tendency toward the humane in such matters. If Mr. Justice Rose, Justice Patterson, Chancellor Boyd, Vice-Chancellor Proudfoot, and one or two other Ontario judges who are humane Christian men as well as eminent jurists, could be transferred to Ireland for a short time, the effect might be good.

THE point raised by our correspondent, "A. W.," in the last issue of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, is well worthy of most serious consideration. There is no doubt that such phrases as "joining the Church," "becoming a member of the Church," "being received into the Church" are often misleading and unscriptural. Referring to the use of the words "added to the membership," our correspondent asks:

Is it intended to include all born of professed Christian parents as well as those received from other congregations? If not, it is surely very defective. Or is it intended to mean communicants? If so, the statement is calculated to teach that the visible Church is composed only of communicants, and to lead the young and others to believe that they have no place as members in the congregations, and no responsibility as members until they become communicants. This doctrine is widely spread in the Church, and is doing much mischief among the young. To read these reports, and to listen to much of the language of many ministers and others about the children of professing parents "joining the Church," "connecting themselves with the Church," and being "received into the Church," one would suppose they never had a place in the Church as members, and that the Good Shepherd has no lambs in His flock. This is the general impression produced upon the minds of the young, and hence so many of them feel no responsibility resting upon them to discharge the various duties incumbent upon them as members of Christ's visible Church. Those who use such language I know profess to believe "that the visible Church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children," but they are practically teaching another doctrine.

There is no doubt that much of the current phraseology about receiving members into the Church is not only misleading, but is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Confession. An Indian in the North-West may be received into Church; but no such language should ever be used in connection with the children of believers. Can we blame our young people for thinking they are outside the Church

until they become communicants, if the language used by our reports, and by many ministers and elders, conveys that very idea? The teaching of the New Testament and the teaching of the Confession is that the children of believers are in the Church, whether communicants or not. Our theory of baptism implies the same fact.

MANY of our readers may find some difficulty in believing that the following exquisitely beautiful verses were written by an incurable patient in the Lunatic Asylum, Toronto. Were it not that they are vouched for by Dr. Clarke, the courteous and efficient superintendent of the institution, we frankly confess we never could have believed they came from any such source.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

I love to view thee, beautiful star,
Shining in lustre from afar;
Above earth's ever varying scene,
Thou sit'st tranquil and serene.

Thou dost thy peaceful station keep,
While underneath thee dark clouds sweep;
And storms may dash o'er earth and sea,
But storms may never reach to thee.

O, could I mount yon studded blue,
And sit securely there with you,
With what delightful haste I'd go,
And leave this gloomy vale below.

As thus I mused, from yon bright sphere
A voice seemed wafted to my ear:
It spoke—at least to me it spoke—
And thus the pensive silence broke:

Stop, mortal, stop, and think one hour;
While I reflect my Maker's power,
Thou may'st reflect His richest grace!—
Then cease to envy me my place.

Though high in heaven's blue vault I shine,
My nature's lower far than thine,
And thou may'st glow with purer light
When I am quenched in endless night.

My home is in these lower skies,
And I can never higher rise;
But thou may'st soar to climes above,
Reflecting rays of heavenly love.

Around this dusky globe I roll,
Diffusing light from pole to pole;
But thou may'st shine in worlds unknown,
Revolving round Jehovah's throne.

My light is borrowed from the sun,
But thine is from the Holy One;
Thy dream of earthly bliss let go,
And thy superior nature know.

Hereafter let the vulgar talker about the inmates of asylums keep his vulgar tongue still. The writer of these verses and the writer of some others published on Spring—which we may give our readers at another time—prove most conclusively that some of the inmates of asylums have minds incomparably superior to those possessed by many who are considered sane. As one reads these stanzas, and feels their power and beauty, he can scarcely help asking, What is insanity? Clearly the mind that conceived these verses is almost infinitely superior to many minds considered sane.

RAY PALMER, D.D.

HOWEVER deep their attachment to their own denomination, those who have made permanent additions to Christian hymnology belong distinctively to the Church Universal. Whatever tends to the enrichment and culture of spiritual life is the common heritage of all the Churches. Toplady was a devoted Presbyterian, and J. H. Newman a zealous Roman Catholic; but the hymns "Rock of Ages," and "Lead Kindly Light," give fitting and devout expression to the deep faith and trust of the Christian soul in whatever Church it may find a congenial place of worship. May it not be that these grand and abiding Christian hymns have a mission to accomplish in awakening in the soul a longing for that higher and deeper unity of spirit among all the disciples of Jesus Christ, than even the most skilfully constructed bases of union and organic federations are able to accomplish?

Another of those who has contributed to the Christian Church of our time a hymn that it will not willingly let die, has in a ripe old age entered into his rest. The Rev. Ray Palmer, D.D., whose praise is in all the Churches, has finished his ministry on earth, and joined the multitude whose praise is pure and unceasing. A year ago he had a slight stroke of apoplexy, from which he never fully recovered. For