

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN,
— PUBLISHED BY THE —
Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Company
(C. BLACKETT ROBINSON),
AT 5 JORDAN STREET, - TORONTO.

[TERMS: \$2 per annum, in advance

ADVERTISING TERMS:—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, 1.50 per line; 1 year \$3.50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

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MR. WALTER KERR—for many years an esteemed elder of our Church—is the duly authorized agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Kerr in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1886.

THE Blue Book of the past year is to hand, and furnishes another illustration of the fact that, other things being equal, congregations grow most rapidly in growing populations. Toronto increases in population more each year perhaps than any other place in the Dominion, and the increase in the membership of our congregations last year was unusually large. Knox leads off with 173, St. Andrew's follows closely with 156, the East Church with 150, and College Street with 139. The others are as follows: West Church, ninety-nine, Parkdale, eighty-nine, Central, eighty-six, Chalmers, eighty-two, Charles Street, seventy-two, Old St. Andrew's, fifty-one, Erskine, fifty, Deer Park, thirty-nine, Leslieville, thirty-five. St. James Square and Coe's Church, being vacant, added only thirty-four each, another illustration of the bad effects of a prolonged vacancy. St. Andrew's added ninety-three by profession of faith. One specially gratifying fact brought out by these figures is that the churches in the business part of the city hold their own and a great deal more. In most cities the usual course is to move the churches out of the business part toward the suburbs, and thus follow up the people who build suburban residences. In this way the dense population of the business portion is often neglected. It is not so in Toronto. Knox and St. Andrew's are in the very heart of the business portion of the city, and they had the largest additions last year. Doubtless they retain most of their old members who have moved toward the suburbs, and draw largely on the hotels and boarding houses besides. These congregations are proving beyond all doubt that it is not always necessary to move "up town" in order to have a prosperous church. It is also gratifying to notice that most of the suburban congregations are growing with great rapidity. The fact that a young congregation like Chalmers should add eighty-two members in a year shows that Toronto is a good city to build up congregations in. That Presbyterianism is growing in the capital of Ontario is an undoubted fact. The only question is, Are we growing in proportion to the rapid growth of the city? We should say yes.

THE Blue Book again strikingly shows the fluctuating character of the population in which a Canadian minister has to work. In Toronto, for example, our congregations added during the year about 1,300 members. They lost by death or removal about 800, nearly two-thirds of the members added! Of course they are not lost to the Church, as many of them merely moved from one part of the city to another, or to some other part of the country. Still, so far as the congregations they moved from were concerned, they were lost, and the loss of so many shows how difficult it is, even in the most growing city in the Dominion, to make a congregation a solid body. Our student population, doubtless, accounts for many removals. The city is full of students every winter. The majority of these students are, we believe, Presbyterians. Many of them are members of the Church. They leave in hundreds at the close of their sessions or when they finish their term of study, and, of course, take their certificates. Large removals, however, are not confined to Toronto. Looking down the column

in the report of any Presbytery we find the removals are large. The most discouraging cases are in the country. A few good families leave a small congregation where the help of all is needed, and the congregation becomes seriously weakened. There is no remedy for this state of things. The people move about in any new country, and we must just make the best of the position Providence has assigned to us.

WHEN reading the reports of the riots in Belfast, one cannot help asking, Where are the agitators who excited these people to carnage and bloodshed? They are safe, you may rest assured. They were conspicuous by their absence when the bullets began to fly. By inflammatory appeals, and all the vile arts known to the political hack, who deals in the worst passions of humanity, they incited the people to violence, got their help in the election, and then left their dupes to murder each other. 'Twas ever thus. The demagogue, for his own selfish purposes, starts the fire, and when it has served his purposes he leaves and takes precious good care that his own cowardly carcass is safe. These Belfast rioters were not humanly to blame for the bloodshed. The blood of fifty human beings stains the skirts of the politicians who incited them to violence. It is a thousand pities that the real criminals cannot be caught and punished. Fifty of these unfortunate people were shot. Doubtless, a number will be hanged or otherwise severely punished. But while the unfortunate dupes are being punished, the demagogues who incited them to violence will be enjoying themselves in political clubs in London, or Dublin, or elsewhere, and perhaps chuckling over the manner in which they roused the populace. There is a lesson here for Canadians. Men who cannot discuss political questions without stirring up the worst passions of our fallen nature—without inciting neighbours to butcher each other—should be banished from our public life. Be they Tory or Liberal, Catholic or Protestant, they are unfit to address a civilized people. There are few Protestants in Ontario who cannot number among their best neighbours at least one Roman Catholic, and there are few Roman Catholics who would not number among their best friends several Protestants. Are neighbours living side by side in harmony and peace—doing business with each other every day—to take each other by the throat, at the bidding of every political ruffian, disguised or undisguised, who simply wants to make votes for his party? We are, perhaps, on the eve of a general election, and we say "no," most emphatically, "no." And we believe the people of Ontario will say "no," and stamp out all such ruffianism.

THE Presbytery of Bruce, at a conference recently held, gave the following deliverance on pastoral visitation:

Such visitations should be systematized and regular; with due notice as far as possible given from the pulpit. They should be conducted with reading the Word and prayer; and such intercourse should be had with the family (both old and young) as may ascertain their real spiritual condition, saved or unsaved.

With all due deference to our friends in Bruce, we submit that this does not touch the real difficulties of the case, especially in town and city congregations. As a rule it may be a good thing to give notice of visits, but this plan has its drawbacks. The pastor may be called to some more pressing duty—a funeral, for instance,—in the afternoon on which he intended to make the visits, and half a dozen or more families are disappointed. We quite agree with the Presbytery in saying that a regular pastoral visit should include devotional exercises. But how are we to have the whole family present? In seven cases out of ten, perhaps, in a town or city, the head of the family is not master of his time. He is employed with some one, and his employer cannot, or will not, permit him to leave. The larger children are frequently in situations, and cannot be at home. The smaller ones are at school. How is that family to be visited? As a matter of fact it cannot be, and is not, visited as a family. No reasonable means that a pastor can use can bring the family together. Some pastors try to get over the difficulty by visiting after the tea hour. It would take two or three years to visit a large congregation in this way, and then you would not see all the members of every family. The problem of pastoral visiting, like many other problems, seems easy at first, but it is anything but easy. Not long ago we heard

a pastor who has ministered to a large congregation for a quarter of a century say that one of the most difficult questions he has to face is how to make profitable pastoral visits. The fact that a town or city minister seldom meets the members of his families is one reason why many ministers have serious doubts as to whether the time spent in making pastoral calls might not be better spent in some other way. If one could actually see all the members of a family, and converse with them on their spiritual condition, pastoral visitation would be a great source of strength to every minister. But in our state of society, meeting the family is a very difficult matter.

A FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

MOST of our readers are probably aware that in the crypt underneath Canterbury Cathedral most interesting religious services have been regularly held for over three centuries. The successive generations of worshippers, though meeting in one of the most venerable ecclesiastical structures in England, where the highest religious dignity of the Anglican Church has his seat, have followed a plain and simple style of religious observance. They are the descendants of those who in their own country endured persecution for conscience' sake, who were prepared to sacrifice all, and bid farewell to their native land, rather than forego their inalienable right to worship God, according to the principles revealed in His Word.

To France the blessings of the Reformation, early in its history, were offered. Scholars and thinkers eagerly welcomed the truths of Evangelical Christianity. Men of fervent zeal and earnestness proclaimed the doctrines of the cross, and throughout France the common people embraced the Gospel. The representatives of the Church of Rome offered a relentless opposition. Successive reigning dynasties were only too ready to respond to the frantic appeals of persecuting ecclesiastics; and some of the best blood in France was spilled to appease the insensate fury of bigoted zealots. Many perished in martyr fires at the stake; subsequently that awful blot on the pages of French history—the massacre of St. Bartholomew—left its indelible stain. Then in 1685 came the perfidious Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which drove into exile thousands of France's best and most industrious citizens.

Many countries opened their gates to the fugitives, England among the rest. Never has that or any other land had occasion to regret affording shelter and asylum to the homeless wanderers. They brought with them their valuable qualities, their sterling integrity and their profitable industries. In 1550, at Cranmer's request, Edward VI. granted a charter for the use of the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, to persecuted French refugees. At that time, religious services in conformity with the reformed faith began to be held, and, with the brief interruption caused by Mary's intolerant reign, they have continued to the present time. Shortly after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Church in the crypt reached its greatest prosperity. The place of meeting was unable to accommodate the thousands who came to worship there. Several ministers were employed, and successive services were held, in order to provide for the vast multitudes who desired to enjoy the means of grace. This was not the only French Church in England in those days. In London alone there were twenty-three, and forty-two were established throughout the provinces. In these prosperous days of the French Church in Canterbury Cathedral, large numbers assembled to observe the Lord's supper. Between two and three thousand gathered successively around the communion tables.

The development of industrial life in Britain changed the condition of the industries which these French Protestant refugees built up and in which they excelled. This alien population scattered, and many of their descendants were gradually absorbed in the life of England. To all appearance, this historic church is destined to extinction in a not far off future. Even as long ago as 1788 the French Colony in Canterbury found it difficult to provide adequate maintenance for their ministers, and from 1840 to 1875 they had no settled pastor. In the last named year, the Rev. J. A. Martin, B.D., became the minister of this most interesting historic church. From that