

# The Dominion Presbyterian

IS PUBLISHED AT

370 BANK STREET - OTTAWA

—AND AT—

Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg.

TERMS: One year (50 issues) in advance..... \$1.50  
Six months..... 75  
CLUBS of Five, at same time..... 5.00

The date on the label shows what time the paper is paid for. Notify the publisher at once of any mis take on label.

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Sample copies sent upon application.  
Send all remittances by check, money order or registered letter, made payable to THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

ADVERTISING RATES.—15 cents per agate line each insertion, 14 lines to the inch, 14 inches to the column. Letters should be addressed:

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,  
P.O. Drawer 1070, Ottawa  
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Ottawa, Wednesday, July 2 1902.

## ASSEMBLY NOTES.

The Supreme Court of our Church has once again held its annual meeting and full reports have been given of its proceedings; it is now possible to look back and review the business making serious enquiry as to its spirit and significance. As the meeting was held in a central position, the attendance was large and the evening sittings were as a rule, crowded and enthusiastic. Next year, probably, the Assembly will be much smaller, the proportion of representation has been reduced, and for many of us it will require a large expenditure of time and money to reach the scene of its activity. Let us hope that the more compact body will be more efficient without being less representative. This year though the attendance was large, the business was on the whole well conducted. One cannot help feeling that the Moderator who presides patiently through the long busy hours deserves both respect and sympathy.

The retiring Moderator's address has been published in full and needs careful study rather than critical comment. It was a masterly review of the work of the Church given in a noble spirit. One could not listen to it without feeling that the life of the Presbyterian Church is large and varied, and its work of great importance for the present life, and future growth of the country. The real justification for the existence of a Church is its evangelistic work and beneficent enterprise. Much has been done but as the retiring Moderator shewed, there are large reserves of unused power.

The report of the Century Fund was satisfactory on one side and disappointing on another; that such an immense sum has been raised for the payment of debts is a matter for gratitude, while the shortage in the "Common Fund" is to some extent a sign of weakness. An effort will still be made to raise the amount aimed at for the general work of the Church. The money for this

fund has been largely raised by the rank and file of the Church, big subscriptions by wealthy men have not formed a conspicuous feature of the scheme. It is good that so many have taken part in the movement but the rich men have lost a great opportunity. Surely, we may say that those who have made large fortunes out of the resources of the country owe a debt to the Church of their fathers.

"The battle of the cups" consumed more than a fair share of the Assembly's time and energy. Some thought that our brethren by the sea might have settled that matter at home, instead of provoking a discussion that was vigorous but not always edifying. The position taken by Principal Caven and others that there may be real communion whether you have six cups or sixty seems reasonable but one must concede intelligence and sincerity to those who think that "the individual cup" destroys the idea of communion, as well as to those who maintain that to give liberty to the congregations in this matter is another dangerous step towards independence. The matter is relegated to a committee and the people are at least left at liberty to think about it.

The trouble among the Missionaries in India, caused the one painful feature in the Assembly's programme. We are not inclined now to discuss the merits of the case but thus we must say, that there can be no greater hindrances to foreign missions than squabbles of this kind. The original meaning of the word "heresy" is "faction" and certainly there is nothing more alien to the spirit of the Christian religion than the spirit of faction and schism. Errors of opinion should be avoided if possible but "orthodoxy of the heart" is essential. If those who are sent out to teach the heathen cannot work harmoniously together, the gospel is wounded in the house of its friends. One can only speak of this incident with painful regret.

The Colleges came in for a fair share of attention and were the subjects of various resolutions. Fortunately there was no heated debate and no heresy trial. Dr. McMullen seems to be troubled about the teaching in some of our Colleges but as he made his complaint in connection with the report from Montreal, Principal McVicar was quite ready to utter reassuring words. Discussion was staved off by the assurance that there would be an opportunity for dealing with the question when the overture from the Presbytery of Toronto came up. That overture came up on the last night of the Assembly's sitting but it was not long up, it received short shift. The prevailing feeling evidently was that the Colleges might safely be left a little longer without a special committee to look after them.

Mr. John Charlton's proposal to gather all the Colleges into two great Presbyterian Universities did not receive much attention, it is regarded by many as an impossible suggestion. Principal Grant was missed, and one of the finest speeches was Principal Caven's noble tribute to the late Principal of Queen's University. Prof. Ross of Montreal, a graduate of Queen's, moved an amendment to the report to the effect that the Assembly

would gladly welcome the University if the Trustees could see their way to come into closer relationship to the Church instead of moving in the opposite direction. Though the amendment was inexpedient, the feeling expressed will no doubt be considered by the Trustees when they come to review the whole situation as Principal Caven pointed out, it is not possible or desirable for the Assembly suddenly to reverse a movement that has been long in progress.

The loss of Professor Douglas was felt keenly by the Assembly and especially by the Alumni of Knox College. During his brief stay in Canada he had endeared himself to those who came into close contact with him. He was preparing to consecrate himself fully to the work of the College, and threw himself heartily into the life of the country. The whole Church is the poorer by the loss of such a noble man and the cutting short of a splendid career.

Home Missions, of course, bulked largely in the proceedings of the Assembly. Dr. Robertson's influence was felt though he was no longer with us. Three strong tried men were set apart to carry on the great work for which he sacrificed his life. The creation of a new class of minister-evangelists caused misgivings in the minds of many thoughtful men; it was only carried through on the plea that it was a special and temporary measure to meet a pressing need. We can only hope that it will help the work in the West without lowering the general standard of ministerial education. Thus we see that our Church has many "problems," and that is not a thing to be regretted as it proves that the Church is living and growing. All things considered, it is possible to look back with satisfaction and gratitude upon the Assembly of 1902.

## THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

### The Coronation Postponed.

As an illustration of the uncertainty of all human plans, even when controlled by the mightiest potentate; of the vanity of pomp and pageantry; of the display of wealth, and grandeur, and magnificence gathered from the four quarters of the globe by one supreme effort of the mightiest of earthly Kings, that which occurred last week through the illness of His Majesty King Edward VII., is likely to become the most historic in modern times. The Coronation and all its attendant circumstances was the supreme event, which not only the King and Royal family, and all the courts of all civilized countries had been looking forward to for over a year, but also the whole nation, the entire empire to its utmost bounds, and the whole civilized world. The King, the central object in the whole splendid tableau, is seized with critical illness, and in a moment as it were, the whole scene changes; gloom takes the place of grandeur, and tears and prayers and agonizing anxiety take the place of shouts of joy, the acclamations of thousands upon thousands, and a whole empire's abandonment to feasting, and mirth and gladness. We know of no similar instance in modern history, of the hand of Providence being laid at such a juncture, upon the chief actor in so magnificent a design as the intended Coronation.