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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6th, 1888.

THE Episcopal Bishop of the Synod of Niagara receives an annual salary of \$2,017. Out of this income he has to pay house rent and travelling expenses. Our Anglican neighbours across the lake no doubt appreciate very highly the apostolic succession, but they do not allow the appreciation to get down into their pockets. We know several Presbyterian Bishops who have incomes three or four times as large as the income of his Lordship of Niagara. Episcopalianism has a good deal of "tone" about it, but in the matter of paying the high toned Episcopalian is a long way behind the plain Presbyterian. Our neighbours spend so much on "tone" that they have little left even for the Bishop. Some of our Presbyterian congregations contribute almost as much for missions as a whole Diocesan Synod. A Church that claims such a close connection with the apostles should have more apostolic zeal.

THE General Assembly of the American Presbyterian Church introduced an innovation at the late meeting in Philadelphia which must have made the conservative members tremble for the welfare of the Presbyterian Zion. There is an immense amount of work in that great Presbyterian court, and the Moderator at times becomes weary. To assist him in his duties the Assembly appoints a Vice-Moderator. The Deputy Moderator at this meeting was an elder—Governor Beaver, of Pennsylvania. He presided over the great Assembly for a whole sederunt, and no fell disaster came upon the fathers and brethren. The constitution sustained no serious fracture. The Standards were not lowered to any great extent. Of course some members thought the new departure was "illegal," "unconstitutional," "incompetent," "contrary to use and wont," "ultra vires" and several other fearful things; but the Pennsylvania elder ran the great ecclesiastical machine quite as well as any Doctor of Divinity, and perhaps very much better than many could have done. In fact it was generally admitted that he discharged his duties with rare dignity, tact and ability. No dire calamity is likely to befall the Church because an elder presided over its hundredth Assembly.

ONE of our contributors undertook to show the other week that Calvinism in the United States is neither dead nor dying. The following paragraph, taken from the *Interior's* descriptive report of the Centennial celebration in Philadelphia amply confirms that view:

If any one had any doubt as to the matter before the Centennial day, it is all gone now. Calvin himself could not have stated the doctrines of God's sovereignty and man's freedom, of election, predestination, and the verbal inspiration of the Word of God, any stronger than they were presented on the Centennial day; and the thundering applause, round after round, that burst forth in response to the statements of the old Calvinistic faith, could not be misinterpreted by any possible twisting. Tears ran down over the faces of elders and divines as the Calvinistic doctrines of the Church, which they had been taught from their youth up, were restated and emphasized by the silver-tongued orators of the Centennial day. It was a grand and glorious day. It was indeed a day of Centennial rejoicing. The grand old Presbyterian ship was found to be sailing fearlessly on in the deep sea of God's sovereign love, true to the compass of His revealed will, as found in His Holy Word.

We venture to predict that some day in the not distant future the Northern and the Southern Churches will unite on the Standards pure and simple. Dr. Mc-

Cosh suggested a resolution to that effect in the last Assembly, and his suggestion would in all probability have been carried out had an immediate step in advance been taken. It will come to union on the Standards, pure and simple, in the end. No better basis can be framed.

ONE of the best speeches in the late meeting of the American General Assembly was delivered by an elder from California who described himself as "an old forty-niner who went West in search of gold, and found the pearl of great price." The following suggestion made by him in regard to the establishment of a new chair in theological colleges is well worthy of consideration.

I hear a great deal of education. Two nights you've talked of it in that nice building (Academy of Music) over there. But there's a kind of education you've never touched on. You've all sorts of chairs in your colleges and seminaries, but there's a chair you've not got yet, and that's a chair of systematic beneficence. (Applause.) The ministers are not educated up to that, and some of them are awfully afraid of a collection.

Some of them are, and so are some of the people. A chair that taught not only systematic giving, but all the details connected with organizing, equipping and working congregations would most undoubtedly be a good thing. A young pastor who knows all about heresies 2,000 years old, but does not know how to go about the election of elders is certainly not well equipped for his work. A short course of lectures on actual congregational work by pastors who have done the work successfully would be of immense advantage to many students. There are many things to learn that cannot be learned from text books, and it is much better to learn them in college than at the expense of congregations.

THE *Globe* gives the usual arguments in favour of introducing a modified form of itinerancy into the Presbyterian system and winds up in this way:

Yes, the subject is worth the consideration of Church courts. Such a change as hinted at might save many a congregation from utter collapse and many a worthy preacher from enforced idleness, endless worry, and very possibly from practically a wasted and disappointed life.

Yes, the subject is well worth the consideration of the Church courts, and will, no doubt, be considered ere long, as Sir John would say. But even under the present system there is not the slightest danger of an "utter collapse" in many congregations. The one institution that never does utterly collapse is a Presbyterian congregation. Banks have failed, loan companies have closed their doors, railways have been swallowed up. Municipalities have come dangerously near repudiation, dozens of commercial houses have come down with a crash, manufacturing concerns have been wound up; but the number of Presbyterian congregations that have collapsed might be counted on the *Globe* writer's thumbs. There is no better security in Canada to-day than a loan made to a well established Presbyterian congregation. Who ever lost a dollar by an investment of that kind? Money has been lost in every other way. Great commercial houses and business concerns of every kind have gone down and paid a few cents on the dollar, but the weakest Presbyterian congregations have rarely failed to meet every cent of their liabilities. Utter collapse!—there is no such thing known in the history of Canadian Presbyterianism.

LAYMEN IN CHURCH COURTS.

THE free and full discussion of all practical, and it may be merely speculative questions affecting the well being of the Church is something that no one need view with apprehension. Frank interchange of opinion on matters of interest cannot be justly regarded as anything else than beneficial. In the healthful currents of popular discussion the mists of prejudice and the preconceived opinions of mere doctrinaires are generally reduced to their proper proportions, and generally speaking one's ideas on ecclesiastical matters are disposed of according to the merit they have or do not have. In free discussion personal opinion and individual authority are ceasing to be factors of grave importance in the final settlement of questions agitating the public mind.

Every now and again the position of laymen in the administration of Church affairs emerges for consideration. In such discussions the tolerance and breadth that might be expected from well-read and intelligent

Presbyterians is not always apparent. Those at all acquainted with the subject cannot fail to regard it as a mistake to assume that it is a class question. There is no well-grounded reason to suppose that an antagonism between teaching and ruling elders exists. Ministers are not as a class systematically trying to minimize the standing and influence of the eldership, neither are the elders as a body endeavouring to magnify their office at the expense of their brethren in the ministry. That individuals in either office may occasionally engage in unseemly struggles for supremacy is within the range of probability. Ministers are human, so are elders, and that either should be entirely exempt from human infirmity is hardly to be expected, but to reach a general conclusion from particular instances is a faulty method of reasoning.

The Presbyterian Church is remarkably free from clerical domination. The will of the people has as much, if not more sway in the direction of its affairs than in any other ecclesiastical organization. No alteration of any importance in doctrine, discipline or administration can be made without the ratification of the people. The humblest member has free access to every court of the Church. What to him is a matter of importance is sure to receive a fair consideration. He can bring it by memorial or overture before his Session. With his views the entire Session may fail to sympathize, but that does not bar his way. If his paper is properly and respectfully expressed, the Session is bound to transmit it if he so desire to the Presbytery. If they do not entertain his proposal, they are not on that account at liberty to refuse its transmission to the Synod, where, if he choose, he can appear in person to urge its adoption. Even the highest court of the Church does not determine any change of importance without ascertaining the mind of the people as expressed through the regularly constituted subordinate courts. All deliverances embodying matters of moment, after being passed by substantial majorities are remitted, to Presbyteries before final action is taken.

The position of laymen in Presbyterian judicatories is in advance of that maintained in several of the other leading Churches. From the first, clerical and lay representation has been co-ordinate. The membership of a Presbytery is composed of a clerical and lay representative from each settled charge. If a congregation happens to be vacant it continues to send its elder, though for the time being it has no minister to represent it. The same law applies to Synodical representation—a minister and an elder from each congregation within the bounds being entitled to a seat. For the General Assembly the representation is more restricted, but the restriction applies equally to ministers and elders. A Presbytery appoints its commissioners, lay and clerical, in equal number according to its membership. In the selection of delegates considerable latitude prevails. The mode of election is not defined, and each Presbytery adopts its own method and makes such changes as from time to time it may deem most advisable. Where uniformity in modes of election does not exist, as might be expected, slight anomalies occasionally appear. Some Presbyteries may appoint their delegates, one-half from the top and the other half from the latest additions to the roll, or they may take the half of their representation from the roll and elect the other half by the ballot. Elders may be chosen in the same way, or all the lay delegates may be elected by ballot. On grounds of expediency, elders are sometimes appointed who are resident at or near the city where the Assembly meets. Thus the Presbytery of Columbia may appoint an acting elder residing within the bounds of the Halifax Presbytery. A minister, however, cannot be appointed to represent a Presbytery in which he is non-resident.

While from the constitution of the Church there is no disparity in the standing of the minister and elder in the Church courts, in actual fact the elders do not take the prominent part they might. If, in attendance they are outnumbered by ministers, that cannot be charged against the ministers. Had they the will, they have not the power to diminish the number of lay representatives, which by the constitution is equal to their own. A pretty lengthened experience in attendance on Church Courts does not lead to the conclusion that any obstacle is thrown in the way of elders taking an active part in the deliberations and committee work of the courts, if they wish to do so. An elder who can deliver an effective address, or is