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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN
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C. Blackett Robinson, Editor.

Ottawa, Wednesday, May 3, 1905.

James Douglas, in "The Man in the Fugate," has the following suggestive remarks: "Have you ever found two churches exactly similar? I have not. Each church has its own sharp personality. . . . It changes you. What you were before you crossed the threshold is not what you are afterwards."

"Hon. J. W. St. John, the new speaker of the Ontario legislature, has excused wine and other intoxicants from social functions under his control. He deserves great credit for having the moral courage to back up his conviction with action. It is not a little thing to withstand the peculiar strong pressure of established social usage and to ignore custom for conscience sake. So says an exchange."

Quite true. But Mr. St. John is a man of strong religious convictions. A member of the Methodist church, he has long taken a lively interest in religious work; has been a Sunday school teacher for many years; and all moral questions has in him a sympathetic friend. Mr. St. John is the first Conservative to fill the Speaker's chair in Ontario; but it is safe to say that the best traditions of that high position will be zealously observed by the present incumbent.

In the death of Alexander Harvey Taylor, Ottawa loses a most estimable citizen, and St. Andrew's church a faithful worker. A few days ago in excellent health, to all appearance, Mr. Taylor seemed good for many years of usefulness; and his sudden taking off in the early spring time, especially in view of his hearty love for nature, seems peculiarly pathetic. His sons and daughters, several of them far removed from home, will have the heartfelt sympathy of numerous friends in their sore bereavement; and to a large number in city and country, their father's sunny disposition and sterling character will long remain more than a memory. Of his connection with one of our national societies the Journal very properly remarks:—"Of the St. Andrew's Society he had been the mainstay for a generation. In its ranks he will be missed beyond any place elsewhere, save in his home; and during his long connection with the society and its benevolent aims, he did unostentatiously much of kindly work of which the public was unaware."

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS.

This was the subject of a lecture recently in Belfast, by a Professor of Edinburgh University. The subject is of very great importance, in Canada as well as in Britain. Here we have had ugly revelations in the courts as to unlawful acts at elections; and alleged widespread political corruption was a leading issue at the last provincial contest in Ontario, when a capable ministry was ignominiously defeated on this ground alone. We quote from the Belfast Witness, and cordially endorse our contemporary's view, that Christianity should not be kept apart from politics, as "it is the inspiring motive and guide in our public national life."

"The Professor began by adverting to the feeling of some that Christianity has nothing to do with politics any more than with astronomy or geology. There are Church men, and wise men, too, who think the Church should not meddle at all with politics, and that the Ministry should stand aloof, not even voting at an election. Others, again, take the opposite view, taking a Party side, and speaking on Party platforms, and writing in Party newspapers. Professor Peterson, being of the Church of Scotland, can be trusted to avoid either extreme, and so he dealt with principles only, vital guiding principles; thus he holds that Christianity contributes to politics the principle of spiritual equality, the law of liberty, and the principle of brotherhood. The right idea on this subject was given in a sermon by Robertson, of Brighton, to whom the lecturer might have referred. Robertson said: "What have the laws of the atmosphere to do with architecture? Apparently nothing, in reality much. Atmospheric laws regulate the slope of the roof, the position of the windows, the arrangement of the eaves, etc. Even so, Christianity does not lay down political rules, yet it influences the whole public life of the nation, and pervades like an atmosphere all political conduct." We quote from memory, but we believe correctly. It is impossible, then, to keep our Christianity apart from our politics, because it is the inspiring motive and guide in our public national life. This is not to say that the Church is to become a political machine, or that it should identify itself with any one political party. The Church is the spiritual home of all Christian people, the nurse of all the children, and the Saviour of all sorts and classes of men. The Church services must be such as to edify persons of various schools. The Ministry should be welcome at the sick bed of all sections of political opinion. The Party politician who merely works to get the other side out and his own side in is not worthy of any Christian sympathy or esteem. But, as the old painters always pictured a saint with the halo round his head, so the Christian must carry his religion with him into the polling booth, and help on every measure that is for the glory of God and the welfare of men."

WHY THE TRAMP DOES NOT WORK.

A university professor, wishing to study the tramp question during a summer tour through England, interviewed 2,000 wandering beggars, whom he questioned as to why they did not support themselves by work. Six hundred and fifty-three said they were willing to work, but could not obtain employment; 445 gave vague, unsatisfactory answers; 301 expressed the opinion that no one ought to be obliged to work, but if some tools did so they (the vagrants) considered they were justified in living on them; 407, according to their own statement, were proceeding to procure work at certain far-off localities, and the remaining 194 were living in hope until their relations should die and leave them money.

"CHURCH UNION" AT SYNOD.

On this subject "Observer," in the Stratford Beacon, gives some jottings on what he heard at a recent meeting of Hamilton and London Synod:

As was expected "Church Union" and "Social Problems" did bring out the best thinking power of the Synod. And when Dr. Macdonald, who preaches every Sunday to his Gaelic hearers in Mossa, and who looks anything but a convert to a mild Calvinism, came out decisively in favor of reconstruction in creed, and union in organization, there is no doubt that the world is moving and the dreams of men coming to pass. It was a bold stroke to relate a bit of his experience in Mevotba. His charge involved three services and a drive of thirty-two miles every Sunday. A Methodist minister went over the same road from the other end, and an Anglican brother also covered the same ground, each meeting with almost the same people, yet being burdened with a total of 96 miles of hard travelling. The consequence was his health broke, the Methodist went into insurance business, and the Anglican found a refuge in England. It goes without saying that Mr. Macdonald will be a power in an experience meeting in the United Church.

The old men, however, had the ear of the Synod. One noted divine said: "I to stop his deprecations, which often ruin but it will take time." Another old servant added: "I am inclined towards union. We must look it in the face, and talk it out with our neighbors." And still another ex-moderator added—the difficulty at present is that the life of the people in the proposed union is not yet homogeneous. Both sides require to meet sympathetically. He illustrated by the Scotchman's prayer "O Lord keep us right, for if we gang wrang we are verra positive."

Rev. W. J. Clarke of London may be said to typify the correct reading of the Presbyterian temperature—"I have a strong bias against union, and I find in private conversation that I am far from being alone. But as one who has met with the Union Committee in Toronto, if an unsurmountable difficulty exists, it is still in the dark for I have not seen it. The way seems plain therefore that we should minimize difficulties and magnify blessings."

Mr. MacBeth of Paris, a man born on the prairies, and for a time a central figure in the ministry of British Columbia, gave a decided curve to the sentiments of the meeting when he said, "We are confronted with such problems in the West today, that it will take all the churches with all their power and distinctiveness to solve them."

A GIFT TO OUR MINISTERS.

Through the kindness of a member of the American Presbyterian Church, Montreal, the Foreign Mission Committee is sending out to every Presbyterian Minister in Canada a copy of Mr. J. R. Mott's latest book, "The Pastor a Force in Missions."

The friend, whose liberality makes this possible, does it in the hope that the contents of this remarkable book will reach the congregations through the ministers and prove a stimulus to largely increased interest. It is known to have done so already in many places. It will be appreciated by the Foreign Mission Committee. It would be very useful if each minister after receiving his copy should in acknowledging, express his views as to the use to which the book can be put, in order to be most effective.

"The Sunday Magazine" has an excellent portrait of George MacDonald from a drawing by Tom Peddie, and the opening article deals with "George MacDonald at Bordighera." It gives a pleasant picture of the great novelist, poet, and preacher, and his piety, kindness, and helpfulness.