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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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 C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor

Ottawa, Wednesday, March 16 1904.

An influential manifesto against cigarette-smoking by boys has been gotten up in England, says the Christian Guardian, signed by representatives of the great political parties, the aristocracy, the clergy, the medical profession, and many others. We hope the efforts made last year for prohibition of the manufacture and sale of cigarettes in Canada will be renewed at the approaching session of Parliament, and that technicalities will not again be invoked to nullify them.

Some enterprising (?) people in Sydney, B. C., erected a Brewery in that town and applied for a license in order to commence operations. The people did not want such an institution in their midst, particularly as it was situated nearer to a public school building than the law allows, and memorialised the Government against granting the license. The license has been refused, and the building, which cost \$30,000 can now be devoted to some legitimate and useful purpose.

THE WIDENING CANADIAN FIELD

The delay in going on with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway scheme caused many to fear the financial or other difficulties might be insuperable. But all obstacles seem to have been removed; the five millions have been deposited by the Grand Trunk; and all that remains to be done as a preliminary is to enact certain amendments, which Parliament will speedily do. This great project will in a few years open up a vast additional territory. During the next 25 years Canada will have taken giant strides. We have improved many recent opportunities to say, and we repeat again, that the duty of the churches in the Dominion is to be forehanded, and keep Canada for Christ. If it can be done—and it can—then it ought and must be done. Let large view prevail at the next and ensuing General Assemblies.

MODIFIED ITINERANCY.

At the recent meeting of the Quebec Presbytery an overture to the General Assembly was presented by the Rev. Mr. MacQueen, looking in the direction of a modified itinerancy. It has been of late years frequently remarked that the Presbyterian and Methodist churches have been approaching more closely in tenures of pastorate. It is common observation that Presbyterian pastorates are not as long as they were twenty or thirty years ago; while on the other hand, all legislation in Methodist Parliaments has been in the direction of longer ministerial tenures. Presbyterians must manage to give all their ministers employment, as the Methodists do; and they must find some more dignified method of severing pastoral relationships than is now sometimes the case. We have seen the suggestion that a stated five-year term of pastorate would meet the case, with the right to renew for another term, and still another, if mutually desired. Those who advocate this plan claim the end of each five years would form a convenient, dignified point and opportunity of disjunction, if disjunction were best for all concerned; while at the same time it would not in reality lessen the average duration of pastorates—perhaps the opposite.

There is something to be said for the Methodist system, in that it undertakes to provide work and livelihood for all its ministers, all the time, so long as they are capable of active service. Without their itinerant system, that would be impracticable. Is it impossible to combine the best of the two methods?

Our readers will be interested to read the full text of the suggestive overture presented by Mr. MacQueen:

"Whereas the frequent dissolution of the pastoral relation is a growing evil in our Church, arising largely through the loose opinion which prevails as to the relation of pastor and people;

"And whereas, the frequent dissolution of the pastoral relation is accompanied by real hardship to ministers and serious loss and injury to congregations;

"And, whereas the view of the pastoral relation being permanent is no longer a truism but is subject on the one hand to restlessness on the part of the ministers themselves and changed feeling of a party in a congregation involving in many instances a breach of contract whereby a minister and his family are thrown upon the world without adequate support;

"And, whereas the view is widely held that the feeling of adaptation between pastor and people on the one hand, and the prosperity of our Church by the due exercise of discipline on the other, can be more satisfactorily and harmoniously attained by a modified itinerancy in the ministry, it is humbly overtured by the rev. the Presbyter of Quebec, to the venerable the General Assembly, indicted to meet in the month of June ensuing, that they would take the whole subject into serious consideration, pass a resolution or law thereon, and send down to presbytery for approval; and, having the favorable

support of presbyteries, to act as in their wisdom they see cause to pass such proposed law into a standing order of the Church, and to devise such measures therean as may tend to promote the glory of God and the good of the Church."

"OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY."

Here is a plot of ground. It lies brown and without beauty before the eye. But a seed has been planted in the ground. And some day when the due time has come the soil is disturbed, and a flower pure and beautiful thrusts itself above and unfolds its beauties for the delighted eye of the onlooker to feast upon. And if you ask where it was that the flower came from, all you can say is that there was a seed planted which had in it the principle of life, and so the very soil itself was transformed in the beauty of the flower. It is a miracle, a miracle to which we are accustomed, but nevertheless a miracle which has been wrought before our eyes in this new life which is implanted, and which now displays its radiant beauty.

And so in this world of sin and selfishness, the life of the Nazarene was planted. The soil was certainly not promising. The only power which ruled the world was the power of force. Rome's mailed legions ruled over the chosen people of God, and that people whose history had many stories of marvellous deliverances, and of saints and heroes were given up to barren ritualism, and sought to satisfy their souls' deepest longings on the husks of ceremonial detail, and fine-spun theological doctrines. Against this background of Jewish pride and Roman brutality here grew the beauty of this stainless life. "He was despised and rejected of men," and yet there were eyes which were charmed by the radiance of holiness that was manifested in Him. He spoke not as the scribes, but as one who had found out the secret of God's thought. He taught trust and purity, but above all He taught them to love. He showed them the beauty of the child character, and led them to look up to God as their Father in heaven. And there were certain who were drawn to Him. They were not in a day cleansed of their faults and follies, but the life that was in Him became their life, and they grew dissatisfied with that which had held them before. They were convinced of their own ill-doing, so that Peter cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man O Lord." The old idea which possessed them to look on life as that which was to be exploited for self-advantage passed away, and they realized it was a gift to be made beautiful by forgetting self and seeking every opportunity to bless and help others. It led some of them to death and all to suffering and sacrifice, but the best of all was they were crowned with peace. Old things had passed away and all things had become new. And wherever that Gospel has been proclaimed, there have been those who have reached the same conviction, and of them it may be said they have become new.