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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18th, 1889.

MILD weather, lack of sleighing, a short harvest and other causes have produced financial depression in certain lines of business. Unless we have colder weather and better roads there is a strong probability that the year will close a little dull in business circles. It is humiliating to think that the depression will produce more stringency in charitable and religious work than in any other department of human activity. Between the present hour and the second day of next January there will not be one man in Canada who will deny himself one glass of liquor because business is dull and money scarce—just think of that.

COMMENTING on the split in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of the United States, the *Christian-at-Work* says:

We have only to repeat what we have said before; we think the Union would accomplish better work by letting politics alone, and devoting itself to the work of enforcing the best temperance laws, and otherwise remedying the great evil of intemperance. The best way for temperance workers is to work irrespective of party lines; in no other way can they secure the help of the best elements of all parties.

This witness is true. If there is any courting to be done let the political parties court the temperance workers rather than the temperance workers court them. When the temperance people have worked up a powerful public opinion in favour of their cause the politicians will not be backward in seeking their support. It is much better to have the politicians look for temperance support than to dicker with them.

THE death of Jefferson Davis recalls a somewhat ludicrous incident that occurred a few years ago in the General Assembly of the Northern Church. A delegate from the Southern Church was addressing the Assembly on the question of Union and trying to show that the time for Union had not yet come. Among other points to sustain his position he made the following one, which did not turn out well: "Last year when you met at Springfield you adjourned and went in a body to visit the grave of Abraham Lincoln. Now supposing the Churches were to unite and the united Assembly met in a Southern city, how would you Northern men feel if we asked you to adjourn and visit the grave of Jefferson Davis?" The rhetorical pause that followed was broken by an elder who answered in a thin, shrill voice, "We would go most willingly, sir." Just what that elder meant may never be known, but his language would easily bear more than one meaning. It is needless to say that it brought down the house.

OVER in the great city of New York the Presbyterians take their theological discussions easy. At a recent meeting of the Presbyterian Union of that city, a party of four hundred ministers, elders, editors, professors, college presidents, distinguished laymen, ladies and a few ordinary people dined for two hours and then listened while Drs. Patton and Briggs read elaborate papers for and against Revision. According to the *New York Evangelist*—no mean authority on such matters—the dinner "was too good, too rich, too elaborate and hence necessarily twice too long." Though the goodly company sat down about seven o'clock it was twenty minutes to ten before Dr. Briggs began his paper, the reading of which took fifty-five minutes. He was not in good voice and was not well heard. Then our old friend, President Patton, took the floor against Revision and built up an argument which the *Christian-at-Work* says rivalled the best efforts of such lawyers as Choate, O'Connor or Evarts. The company enjoyed the battle of giants immensely and went home in good humour. This mode of carrying on a theological discussion may startle some of our conservative readers, but was it not much more

seemly than an angry little wrangle in which Christian doctrine is discussed in a most un-Christian spirit?

THE advocates of organic union of the Churches might do a worse thing than ponder over the following sentences from Matthew Henry:

Christians should be one in affection whether one in apprehension or no. This is always in their power, and always their duty, and is the likeliest way to bring them nearer in judgment.

Exactly. The more they make of the unity that now exists the nearer they will come to organic union. Mr. Macdonnell once said, if correctly reported, that he would consider the country ready for a prohibitory law when an overwhelming majority of the people stopped drinking without any such law. There was a world of good sense in that remark, and the principle involved applies equally well to Church union. When Christian people of all denominations treat each other as they ought to do organic union will come, if Christ ever intended it to come—but it will not come a day sooner. There are a good many people neither bigots nor fools strongly of the opinion that discussing organic union in Conferences, Alliance meetings, and similar places does very little, if anything, to help union. As an illustration they point to the meeting of the Dominion Alliance in Toronto the other day, and ask, How much did that discussion and the correspondence which followed do to promote union?

MR. W. L. KELLEY, of St. Paul, was a member of the recent Catholic Congress at Baltimore, and we quite agree with the *Intelligencer* and other religious journals in saying that his speech on the school question was wise and patriotic. Mr. Kelley said:

No one but a madman would advocate the destruction of the magnificent system of American public schools. In them, as in the Holy Church, is taught the absolute equality and brotherhood of man. Bring back to their teaching positive religion, so that the children may appreciate the fatherhood of God, and we have the perfect school. Practically there are but four divisions of the American people in religion—Catholics, Protestants, Israelites, and unbelievers. A system perfectly adapted to the division was far from any impracticability, and it would yet be invented and applied.

Practically there are but two divisions of the Canadian people in religion—Catholics and Protestants. We have very few Israelites, and it is not likely that the unbelievers will be a very powerful factor in the settlement of any question. A few Catholics like Mr. Kelley might do a world of good in Manitoba just now if they would come forward and declare in favour of the middle course. Our friends there would, no doubt, meet them half way, and the question would soon be the Middle Course vs. Secularism pure and simple. The best thing, perhaps, indeed the only thing, to keep out pure secularism, is unity of action among those who want religious instruction. Prolonged strife about the kind of instruction or the manner in which it is to be given, would be almost certain to irritate the body of the people until a majority would rise in their might and stop the strife by declaring in favour of a purely secular system.

THE deaths of Dr. Hatch, Dr. Elmslie, and Dr. Macfadyen in quick succession have led to some vigorous discussion on the question of ministerial labour. In each case premature death was due to overwork. Each man is said to have been doing the work of three men and when disease came there was no strength to resist it. In a very able article, under the heading "Over-worked, Over-worried," the *British Weekly* says:

In any case it is the church that ought to guard its ministers' health. With the churches cursed by lazy ministers we have the deepest sympathy. But the tendency in these days is to over strain. Every minister, to begin with, has much to suffer. The finest natures are often, alas! the most sensitive, and a word of discouragement will do more to cast them down than many expressions of love will to cheer. Then the true pastor has a share in every bitter cup put to the lips of his people. Then there is the labour of preaching—great and difficult as it is noble—pastoral oversight, which must not be neglected; and a share in the work of the manifold societies and agencies, etc., that spring up in every vigorous church. Many a man goes on taking his share of all these with hardly a word of recognition, till at last he succumbs, and blind eyes are opened for an instant. What sins are done through ignorance! How long the poor of England have suffered in grim, blind silence: what tragedies of hunger and shame have gone on behind the scene-work of fine shops; and even now light makes its way slowly, and better days tarry. So in our churches we have yet to expel the demon of selfishness, and these noble martyrs have not died in vain if the spirit of earnest thoughtfulness and consideration is awakened by their graves.

Churches cursed by lazy idle ministers are certainly objects of sympathy, but some sympathy, should be kept for the wife and children of men who fall at their post in middle life. The demon of selfishness,

the demon of unreasonableness, the demon of fault-finding, the demon of demanding services that no man can give without imperilling his health, the demon of nagging overworked ministers by others who never did an hour's honest work for Christ themselves—the sooner these and several other demons are cast out, the better for the Church. It is the Church's business to cast them out. As a mere matter of finance it does not pay to lose Elmslies at forty-one.

THE BOSTON CONFERENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

TWO years since a Christian conference was held in Washington, at which leading representatives of the Evangelical Churches in the United States were present. The subjects discussed were of present day import, and the effects of that conference were admittedly of a valuable kind. Judging from the reports of the meetings just held at Boston, extending over three days, they were at least equal in interest and influence if they did not surpass those of Washington two years ago. At most of the Boston meetings Mr. William E. Dodge presided, and in his opening address—one of great power—the key-note was given and the subsequent proceedings were in harmony with the spirit expressed in the president's introductory speech. It was characterized by a profound conviction of the truth and power of the Gospel. "Everywhere," he said, "people are restless and looking for a higher good and a fuller brotherhood of man. We believe that to the Church of God is committed the grand mission of bringing to our own land, and to all nations the message of love and peace. We believe that Christ's life and Christ's words—simple, tender and strong—can touch and change the hearts of all men. All wrongs, all superstitions, all selfishness and injustice will disappear before their gentle power."

Dr. A. J. Gordon, whose recent visit to Toronto has left pleasant memories, delivered the address of welcome. It had the strength, tenderness, and variety characteristic of his mode of address, and was happily expressed. So far as reports indicate, there was little time wasted in the expression of vague sentiment or impracticable suggestion of corporate unity. The general character of the papers read and the discussions that followed was of a practical sort. It is surely significant that so many at the present time are directing their attention to the social problems of the age. Men of diametrically opposite schools of thought are earnestly pondering questions they consider as vitally important. The eagerness with which these subjects are being discussed by scientists and artisans, by large-hearted Christian philanthropists and extreme radicals, seem to bear out Mr. Dodge's statement, "Everywhere people are restless and looking for a higher good." In keeping with this it is noticeable that several of the papers read and not a few of the addresses delivered related to some aspect of these pressing social problems.

Professor Ely, of Johns-Hopkins University, speaking on "The Needs of the City," remarked that the two great needs were religion and nationalism, which he blended into Christian socialism. In the course of his remarks he showed that these extended over a wide range as the following brief synopsis will show:

The means of education, which should be liberally provided and which should for the most part be gratuitously offered. Play-grounds, parade-grounds, play-rooms, and gymnasiums. Half of the wrong-doings of young rascals in cities is attributable to the fact that they have no innocent outlet for their animal spirits. Free public baths and public work-houses, like those which in Glasgow have proved so successful. Public gardens and parks and good open-air music. An improvement of artisans' dwellings and the housing of the poor generally. Complete municipalization of markets and slaughter-houses, rendering food inspection easier and more thorough. Organized medical relief, rendering medical attendance and medicines accessible to the poor without a sacrifice of self-respect and independence. Poor relief ought to be better organized; almshouses should be work-houses and work-houses should be industrial schools. Improved sanitary legislation and administration. Great strides have already been made in this direction, but probably the urban death rate among children of the poor under five years of age could still be reduced one-half. A better regulation of the liquor traffic where its suppression is impossible. Municipal savings banks. Such institutions have produced most gratifying results in many German cities. Deposits should be invested in city bonds and other good securities. The investment in city bonds would tend to give depositors a realizing sense of what they have at stake in municipal government. Ownership and management by the city of the natural monopolies of a local character, like electric lights, gas works, street car lines, docks, etc.

Dr. Strong, secretary of the Alliance, followed, remarking that in the city best and worst met, and from it radiated the most powerful influences for