

**The Dominion Presbyterian**

IS PUBLISHED AT

323 FRANK ST., - OTTAWA

AND AT

MONTREAL AND WINNIPEG

**Terms: One year (50 issues) in advance, \$1.50.**

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**THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.**

P. O. Drawer 563, Ottawa.

**C. BLACKETT ROBINSON.**

Manager and Editor.

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MAR. 11, 1908

By an oversight the name of Rev. W. T. McMullen, D. D., of Woodstock, was omitted from the article on the Eldership in last week's issue.

A religious census of Kingston has just been completed, with the following result: Anglicans, 4,935; Baptists, 469; Congregationalists, 954; Methodists, 4,058; Free Methodists, 143; Holiness Movement, 120; Presbyterians, 3,106; Roman Catholics, 4,873; Catholic Apostolic, 25; Hebrews, 244; Salvation Army, 305; all others, 247. Including the students in attendance at Queen's, the total population is given as 20,070.

Rev. John MacKay, M.A., minister of Crescent Street Church, Montreal, has tendered his resignation of the charge, to accept the principalship of the new Presbyterian College about to be instituted in Vancouver, B.C. He preached his farewell sermon last Sunday, and will almost immediately leave Montreal for the Pacific coast. Mr. MacKay received his degree in Arts from Toronto University, and studied for the ministry abroad, graduating from the United Free Church College of Glasgow, Scotland. In September, 1902, when he returned to Canada, he was called to the pastorate of Crescent Street Church, and soon won the esteem and regard of the congregation although his was the difficult position of succeeding such a strong man as the late Rev. Dr. A. B. MacKay, who had been so many years the pastor. In this removal Montreal loses an able preacher and a valuable citizen; but the West requires strong men in all the walks of life, but more especially in its pulpits and colleges. Mr. MacKay, we feel sure, will amply justify the anticipations of those who have called him to take charge of our new college in British Columbia.

**FAILURE OF THE PRAYER MEETING.**

What part of it has failed? The singing? That can be improved. The handling, or leadership? That may call for more tact, more preparation, more personal prayer.

The conventional, repetitions prayers of those called on to lead in prayer? That is often not the fault of those called on, who often are timid in public prayer, and have no wish to be called on. But even these defects can be cured or modified, though it will need a kindly and tactful handling, and a little education as to what a prayer meeting ought to be. We know of few cases, for example, where reasonable brevity in public prayer is not desirable.

The attendance? It is pleasant to see a full prayer meeting, no doubt, but the numerical test is the last test which should be applied in estimating the success of a prayer meeting. Ministers should be very slow to indulge in berating a congregation for not attending the prayer meeting. That looks too much like the voice of wounded personal vanity. Better let the prayer meeting grow on its merits; but let it have merits to grow on.

If there be any efficacy in concerted prayer, just now would seem to be a bad time to neglect it, when a new movement of the Holy Spirit seems to be sweeping over the world. A prayer meeting with fewer than two would be too few in number to expect the blessing promised to the united petitions of "two or three." But there is no reason why any prayer meeting with as many as two present should be in any sense a failure.

**SENSIBLE SAYINGS.**

A number of sensible things were said at the Canadian Press Association dinner at Toronto. Hon. Frank Oliver said there was no need of such mountains of white paper for a single issue; that compression was needed; that what was required was more brains and less pulp. The publisher of the Chicago Tribune said the leading newspapers were now paying more attention to what advertisements they inserted, as the character of a newspaper was as much indicated by the advertisements it inserted as by its editorial utterances. He also conveyed the cheering intelligence that the public desire for yellow journalism was being succeeded by a better demand. President Falconer also gave a word in season when he pointed out that the increasing number of educated men and women going forth from the universities would compel a corresponding improvement in editorial writing and reporting in the daily newspapers. The time may come when the average report of a lecture or sermon will be adequate and intelligible, even if condensed which is not the case at present.

The heavenly revelation always comes to those who are faithful to earthly duties.

**WASTE NOT YOUR MASTER'S TIME.**

It goes without saying that much of the difficulty in giving serious thought and attention to the work of pulpit preparation is due to the many interruptions to which every minister, more especially those in large cities is subject.

Of the existence of this great evil many are aware; but, unfortunately, many more are entirely unconscious. The feeling that a minister's time is of comparatively little value is not confined to the indifferent who profess to imagine that a minister has little or nothing to do. In most congregations there are active workers who imagine that the minister may attend every conceivable kind of a meeting and take part in every scheme of good doing that is originated. Many belonging to this class of Christian workers are, without being aware of it, unreasonably exacting. If the minister has manliness and firmness enough to decline such invitations, he is too often misjudged, and his refusal is regarded as an offence.

In these particulars some people, it must be owned, are very unreasonable, but all the blame does not lie with them. On the ministers themselves some of it must rest. In some instances, overweening vanity tempts a minister to appear on every platform to make "the speech of the evening" on every occasion that offers, and to have a hand in every philanthropic, benevolent, or other movement that the fertile brain can invent. Without knowing or intending it, such minister dissipates his energies, lessens the real value of his special work, and instead of extending his influence he weakens it. In these busy days no man can do many things well. A multiplicity of duties necessarily renders the thorough performance of them all an impossibility. A wise man will husband his resources and aim at doing the special work he is called of God to do to the very best of his ability.

Presbyterianism the world over owes its influence for good to faithful pulpit work. When this is neglected it becomes weak. To be a faithful ambassador of Christ, to preach the words of life, is the highest honor, the noblest field of labor, to which anyone can aspire. It is worthy of the consecration of the best talent and endowments that can be devoted to it, and the faithful ministry of the Word requires other cogent duties no less important, the neglect of which cannot be compensated for by attention to a host of multifarious calls that might be just as well if not better attended to by others. By a too easy compliance with burdensome and trivial exactions, ministers have accustomed people to make insatiable demands on their time, energies, and strength that seriously interfere with their own proper work, and which account in some cases for the attenuated discourses to which hearers have sometimes to listen.

Intelligent young men may not know when a sermon violates the principles of homiletics, but they are acute enough to discern when it is loosely prepared. A padded discourse satisfies no mortal, and imparts benefit to few hearers. Happily, this evil is not without remedy. For a successful and beneficial ministry conscientious study is indispensable, and this is impossible if a minister's precious hours are frittered away by frivolous demands upon him. Let people be more reasonable in their requirements in this respect, and let ministers exercise more discretion and firmness and the evil will to a great extent disappear.