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TORONTO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1879.

REV. ALEX. TOPP, D.D.

IT is with sincere regret that we record the sudden death of the Rev. Dr. Topp of this city. The event, while happening in a most startling manner, is one for which we were somewhat prepared. Dr. Topp had gone to the old country for recuperation of health, and for the purpose of attending to private business affairs. He returned with certain signs of an ill-fated disease. While the most sanguine hopes were entertained, no one could look upon his revered form without feeling doubts of his ultimate recovery. So strong was the medical opinion concerning the state of his health that it was deemed necessary Dr. Topp should retire at once from the active duties of the ministry.

It is hardly possible to realize that one has gone from our midst, who was active to the last in the discharge of his duties. It was but the other day that Dr. Topp took an active part in the ceremony of laying the corner stone of the "Home for Incurables." He was deeply interested in the reception of the Marquis of Lorne at the meeting held for the purpose in Knox College. It is significant that he died in the house of a member of his church and while discharging the duties of a pastor and a friend. He is the instance of a man, who carried out his ministry to the very end of his career, and who was instant in season and out of season in accomplishing the work which the Lord had laid upon him.

Here, if ever, we have set before us the example of a minister of Christ "dying in harness." It was but the other day that Dr. Topp preached the gospel in a most effective manner. He went to his old charge in Scotland, and set forth with more than his wonted eloquence the message of his Lord. Indeed, it is believed that in doing so he brought to a crisis the fatal disease whose warnings he so lately felt. What more glorious record can be made of a man than that he died in the discharge of his duties—in the full exercise of those mental and spiritual faculties

which made him an honoured servant of Christ.

Dr. Topp has fulfilled the duties of an honoured pastorate for more than twenty-one years in the charge of Knox Church, Toronto. What does this mean? It signifies that he has been most earnest and enthusiastic in the proclamation of the gospel of peace. His one thought has been to impress upon sinners their need of a saviour. He has through these years been dealing with souls and leading them to the cross. What a record is on high of these labours! While he has been most acceptable as a preacher of the truth, he has been constant in his endeavours to deal with the souls of his fellow-men—in visiting the sick, in arousing the careless, in counselling the young, in edifying the Lord's of Christ. The name of Dr. Topp is fragrant amongst the poor and suffering. His revered presence will long be remembered in the sick-chamber and by the side of the dying.

Dr. Topp, besides being a faithful pastor, was a most loyal son of the Church. His own congregation, led by him, has always been distinguished for good-workers. Not only was he most active in his attentions to the poor, but he incited in his people a lofty ambition in the direction of benevolence. His church was ever a centre of Christian effort in behalf of the poor. The lowliest member of his church was dear to his heart. He sought not only by a faithful presentation of gospel truth to turn the hearts of sinners to the service of Christ, but by the amiability of his manners, by the kindness of his looks, by his sympathy as a brother, he instrumentally lifted the poor and despised from the miry clay, and set their feet upon the great spiritual Rock. He was a friend in time of need to every one who sought his counsel.

The name of Dr. Topp is inseparably connected with the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He took an active part in laying broad and deep the foundations of the Church of Christ. In the Church Courts he was always known as a wise counsellor and most active in the discharge of the duties he owed to the section of the Church of Christ with which his lot was cast. Faithful to his conscience, he was a Free Churchman in the best sense of the term. But when the Union of the various sections of the Presbyterian Church became a question of pressing importance, he was one of the prominent leaders in the movement. He sought union as a most desirable object. For this he wrought and prayed, and no better testimony could be given to the value of his services in this cause than the unanimous decision of the Assembly held in Toronto to place him in the Moderator's chair. The duties of this high office he discharged with ability. As his previous efforts had been helpful towards making the Church one in name and organization, so his administration of the office of Moderator was helpful towards uniting the sympathies of the various bodies which had so recently been brought together, and making the Church one in feeling.

It only remains to say a word upon the character of him who has, to many so unexpectedly, been called away. He was a gentleman in

the best sense of the word. He was kind and considerate to every one. He was modest and unassuming in the discharge of his duties. As a Presbyterian he was esteemed for his wisdom by all his brethren. Indeed, every member of the Presbytery waited for his words in any case involving difficulty. In the capacity of husband and father, he was most gentle and loving. At the sick-bed few pastors could compare with him. While prominent in the higher walks of life, and distinguished as a statesman of the Church, there was no minister we can think of who had such a claim to be considered as a most loving friend and companion.

The name of Dr. Topp will never be forgotten in this country. While we regret that he has so suddenly been called away we rejoice that in his case there are left to us so many happy remembrances of a useful and humble career, and that he has bequeathed to the youthful ministry of the Church the example of a brave and honourable servant of Christ.

## OUR SABBATH LAW.

WHY is there delay? Some time ago we were given to understand that the Evangelical Alliance in Toronto and in Hamilton were to have a test case against Sabbath travelling by boats and railways submitted, and if necessary appealed, so as to know from the Supreme Court how the law stands. The Legislature will soon meet and there is now scarcely time to have the subject ready for this Session of Parliament, so that the Christian public will have to submit for another year to Sabbath desecration by our railways. And what is worse, the public will become more familiarized with the sin and consequently will be less easily moved to seeking a remedy. Surely among our prominent city ministers and Christian laymen some one can be found to take the necessary steps. If no other movement is made it may not be amiss for the Sabbath Observance Committee of the General Assembly to take action.

The following statement is worthy of attention from Christian men: According to the decision of A. R. Wardell, Esq., Mayor of the town of Dundas, a railway company, as a carrying company, comes under the exception in the Lord's Day Act and has the right to carry travellers on the Lord's day; and any one who fares abroad either from a desire to enjoy country sights and sounds or from any other motive either of business or pleasure, is a traveller within the Act. Also "a person who has taken a ticket and is about to start in a railway train is a traveller." If this judgment is correct any railway may carry passengers travelling on business or pleasure on the Sabbath. Some question the correctness of that decision, but a gentleman of the highest authority and of undoubted Christian character, says, "The authorities are in such a condition that it will be impossible to say with confidence what the correct view is until the whole matter has been considered and adjudicated on by the Superior Courts." Another, a prominent elder of the Church, and equally distinguished for his ability and learning as a lawyer, says, "As the law is, I see no reason for questioning the correctness of the