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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th, 1890.

A Sabbath School Service for Children's Day

ARRANGED BY THE REV. JOHN McEWEN.

And Published with the approval of the General Assembly's Committee on Sabbath Schools.

This form of Service for Children's Day has been carefully prepared; will be found most interesting, and will not fail to be useful to the "lambs of the flock." The words of the hymns are accompanied with the music; and the programme is neatly printed in four-page form, making it very convenient for handling by the children. Schools should order at once, so that we may be able to form some idea of the number of copies likely to be required. Price per 100, 65 Cents.

PRESBYTERIAN PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO.,

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THERE will be much discussion in Ontario for a few days on the nature and value of circumstantial evidence. The question is not, as many suppose: Are the circumstances consistent with the prisoner's guilt? The proper question is: Are the circumstances *inconsistent with his innocence*? There is a world of difference between these questions.

METHODISM seems to be largely represented on the Ontario secular press. No less than seven newspaper men—with one exception from Western Ontario—have seats in the General Conference. There must be a number more from other parts of the country and a good many at home who have not been promoted to the supreme court. Nobody but a fool will say that having so many journals manned by Methodists is not a source of strength to Methodism. It is often a great advantage to be able to reach the public ear through a friendly medium.

DISGUISE the fact as we may, the press is doing a large part of the work heretofore done by the human voice. Had the Federation question not been thoroughly threshed out in the newspapers, the General Conference would have taken two weeks to settle it instead of five or ten minutes. There was nothing new to be said on the question, and the Conference had too much good sense to spend time in going over the old ground. As Dr. Douglas remarked, not a vote would have been changed by a month's debate. There is one distinct advantage in this modern method of handling burning questions. The steam is pretty well blown off before the court meets. Had all the heat that escaped through the newspapers been condensed in the human breast until Conference met, the explosions would have shaken Canadian Methodism, and might have lasted until Christmas.

THERE is a fine joke about the following alleged stanza of "Lead kindly Light." The *Catholic Review* prints it, thinks it is very appropriate, and adds that the "sectarian houses" never published it:—

Meanwhile along the narrow, rugged path
Thyself hast trod,
Lead, Saviour, lead me home in childish faith,
Home to my God,
To rest forever after earthly strife
In the calm light of everlasting life.

Every Thursday points out that this stanza was written by the Rev. E. H. Bickesteth, and that Cardinal Newman vigorously protested against adding it to his inimitable hymn. The *Christian-at-Work* would like to know if the *Catholic Review* will now withdraw its endorsement. Perhaps the *Review* will say that the foregoing is the fourth stanza Newman would have written if he had written any at all.

HIS HONOUR JUDGE DEAN is one of the few lay members of the General Conference who take any part in the debates but he is a host in himself. In fact his short, pointed speeches are so good that they might be allowed to pass for the utterances of a dozen members. The other day

his honour felt moved to say that there are schemers in the ministry as well as elsewhere. The brethren did not deny the soft impeachment. The judge might have added that one selfish, unscrupulous schemer does more harm to the ministerial profession than can be atoned for by the self-denying labours of a dozen hard-working ministers. One schemer who thinks he is very clever but is not able to cover up his tracks can do more to keep people from contributing to funds of the church in which ministers are specially interested than a dozen ministers can do in the way of raising funds. The worst foe of the ministerial profession is the scheming worldly minister.

AS we go to press the great criminal trial at Woodstock is proceeding. Judge, jury, counsel and all concerned are no doubt aware that the eyes of the Empire are upon them. For reasons with which the public are familiar the case excites more interest in England than any trial that ever took place in this colony. Every patriotic Canadian wishes that the proceedings may be conducted in such a manner as to challenge the admiration of imperial jurists. That all concerned wish to do justice no one has any doubt, but substantial justice may be done in a very undignified and bungling manner. Justice ultimately triumphed in the trial of the Chicago anarchists and in the trial of Guiteau, but the proceedings in both cases did not reflect lustre upon American jurisprudence. We are a young and democratic people, but we venture to hope that this great trial will be conducted with an amount of learning, ability and dignity that will be a credit to the Province of Ontario. Meantime British justice requires that the prisoner be held innocent until his guilt is shown beyond reasonable doubt.

WHEN will the people and press of Ontario give up the silly habit of speaking about Christian Churches being represented on the Bench and in the Cabinet? If a judge or Cabinet minister does his duty faithfully and ably, whose business is it what denomination he belongs to? Just now we are told that two newly-appointed Ontario Ministers are Baptists, and that the Methodists have no representative in the Mowat Government. Well, what of it? Methodism will go on and flourish just as well as if all the Cabinet Ministers were Methodists, and the Baptists won't dip an additional man because Messrs. Dryden and Harcourt are Honourables. Churches are not built up in this country by political influence. The church that has or used to have the largest number of so-called representatives in public life has less spiritual influence than any other in the Province. We can easily understand why the churches in a country that has a state church should be anxious to have as many of its members as possible in influential positions, but in a country like Ontario, where none are established or endowed, what difference does it make? Is it Christian, is it even manly, to speak of the Christian Church as if its success depended on success in politics? There is a mean flunkeyism in boasting that "we" have now so many men in prominent places. Does God's work depend on the number of men a church can send to Parliament?

THE gospel of peace had a distinct triumph in Montreal the other day when the General Conference of the Methodist Church settled the Federation question by a silent vote. This happy result was largely due to the exertions of Dr. Douglas. Never did the "old man eloquent" of the Methodist Church appear to better advantage than when he made a pathetic appeal to the brethren to settle their difference quietly and not make a sorry spectacle of themselves before the Roman Catholics and High Anglicans. The venerable doctor certainly secured the blessing that comes to the peace-makers. The leaders on both sides also deserve credit for the course they pursued. Some of them—notably Dr. Dewar—thought they had personal grievances which the Conference should redress, but they were willing for the sake of Methodism and the Gospel to remain silent. Methodists have always been noted for loyalty to their Church and for that practical wisdom which does the best thing under the circumstances. This last exhibition of loyalty and wisdom will give them much additional influence in the country, and they have a good deal already. What would a fortnight's debate have done? It would have made scars that might have lasted for a generation; it would have thrown firebrands into every circuit in Ontario, and when over the vote would have been just what it was.

THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

THE union of the various branches of the Presbyterian Churches in Canada in 1875, and the consolidation of the Methodist Churches a little later have shown that within certain limits corporate union has been most advantageous, having wrought satisfactorily and without friction. It may be that the hopes of the most sanguine promoters of the movements that led to union in these churches have not been completely fulfilled, but it is certain that the apprehensions of those who were reluctant to go forward have long since been dispelled. Were a motion made in either the Presbyterian Assembly or the Methodist Conference for a dissolution of the union, and that each component part should resume its former condition, it is safe to say that such a motion would, if not laughed out of court, be listened to with impatience and voted down with a significant unanimity.

Fortunately in both the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches since their respective unions there has been no keen contentions involving approach to the lines of cleavage. In both there is the fullest freedom of debate and ample play of individuality. The fear of arousing old prejudices and ruthlessly disturbing old associations and rousing bygone memories is absent and no one could conjure with the old sectarian spirit were he foolish enough to try. The Methodist Church has come triumphantly out of an ordeal that has in a measure put the united Church to somewhat of a test. Whether Victoria University should be removed from Cobourg and enter the Ontario federation of colleges is a question that has been debated with the keenest intensity for the last four years. At the last meeting of the General Conference in Toronto the question was answered in the affirmative by a decided majority. With that decision a number who voted nay were very much dissatisfied, keeping up a persistent agitation for the purpose of annulling the resolution that was carried. Every possible technicality was taken advantage of and the strong arm of the law invoked for the purpose of restraining those who in good faith and in a spirit of loyalty accepted the decision come to by the majority from carrying out that decision. The question has received a definite settlement by the Conference now sitting in Montreal. The manner in which it has been reached is in the highest degree creditable to the wisdom and Christian spirit of the members composing the conference. To the venerable and eloquent Dr. Douglas a high need of praise is generally as it is justly awarded. Realizing as he did the responsibility resting upon the Conference, and being free from complication, not having been a partisan on either side, and enjoying as he does the entire confidence of the Church, he proposed a motion carefully drawn which disposed of what has been a burning question by reaffirming the previous decision, thus settling the matter definitely. In proposing his motion Dr. Douglas took the somewhat unusual course of suggesting that it be voted on without debate. He affirmed that no amount of discussion would alter a single vote, since the members were fully conversant with all the facts, having taken a lively interest in the question through all its phases and had their minds fully made up. This might seem at first sight a great hardship in the case of those who had come fully prepared to take part in one of the principal and most interesting debates of the present Conference. Several indicated their preference for full discussion but it is evident that the majority coincided with the view presented by Dr. Douglas. At all events his suggestion was acted upon, and a decisive majority voted for the motion, reaffirming the decision of the former General Conference, thus finally disposing of a matter that had occasioned much contention and which, had it been prolonged, would have created bitterness and led to animosities destructive of fraternal good feeling. Happily this is now averted, and judging from the manly and generous way in which the chief opponents of federation accepted the decision of the Conference, a sense of relief and gratitude will prevail throughout the Church now that this root of bitterness has been removed. Of the wisdom of the step taken there can be no doubt. Victoria will enter on a grander career of usefulness and prosperity than it has yet experienced.

Other questions having a direct bearing on Methodist discipline as well as of general interest have come before the Conference. The case of the Oka Indians has been taken up with spirit and though at the present writing not yet finally disposed of, it is plain from the general tenor of the remarks made, the Conference will give no uncertain sound on the high-handed measures that have been employed to secure the exile of the Protestant