

## Dominion Presbyterian

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Thursday, April 26th, 1900.

Judging from the copies of the programme we have seen the Conferences of the several Synods will be of unusual interest this year. It is noticeable that the business of the Synod is being relegated to a place of less importance and the sessions, usually given up to the discussion of business, is now devoted to conference. The result will probably be that the attendance at the Synod will increase. The business of listening to reports and passing them on, is not of such paramount importance that men will come fifty miles and spend the greater part of a week to do it.

The impetus given to missionary effort by the last Ecumenical Council, may also be given to such effort by the present great council meeting in New York. Should there be anything like representative discussion, and there is plenty of room for it, there should be a plan of operation evolved from the consideration of what has been most successful in the several organizations, that shall be little short of perfect. Then, too, lagging interest will be awakened by the enthusiasm of those who are alive to all the possibilities of mission work. We may expect a revival of interest all along the line by the beginning of the century.

It is a pity that the men in the farther fields are practically debarred from the benefit of the yearly Synod meetings. In these fields the stipend is small, and the demands upon the minister's generosity is unceasing. When it comes to paying railway fare over a 100 mile journey, or in some instances almost double that

distance, it become an impossibility to attend the meetings. Is it not possible to come to some arrangement, such as was contemplated in the overture submitted last year and sent down to Presbyteries? So far as we have observed, Presbyteries have either ignored the overture or have voted against it. In most instances we venture to say it has been without anything like a careful estimate of what it would cost to bring all the members within a reasonable distance of the meeting place.

Presbyterians are not numerically strong in the Senate of Canada. The oldest member is Hon. David Wark, of Fredrickton, N.B., now in his 97th year, who was called to the Upper House on its organization at Confederation. Considering his great age, Mr. Wark is in vigorous health, and wonderfully bright mentally. A native of county Donegal, Mr. Wark is a fine representative of that sturdy north of Ireland Presbyterianism which has done so much for Canada, and which, for the first century and a quarter, has been such a potent influence for good in the neighboring republic. Seventy-four years ago Mr. Wark first set foot in New Brunswick. He then settled at the Bend, now the flourishing railway and manufacturing town of Moncton. Young Wark did not remain long at the Bend. His reason for leaving was entirely creditable to him: there was no Presbyterian Church at that place, and so he looked for another locality, where the God of his fathers could be worshipped in the simple fashion observed in the old land beyond the sea. He removed to Richibucto, N.B. where he made his home for forty years; going from thence to the capital of the Province, where he still resides when not in Ottawa. Senator Wark is as staunch a Liberal as he is a Presbyterian; and is greatly respected, alike by his fellow members and fellow citizens.

### Teaching the Children to Pray.

Every parent who faithfully discharges his duty is a teacher of prayer. The responsibility this obligation involves cannot be overestimated. The child's future conceptions of God, duty, prayer and other spiritual things will be shaped in a large measure by what he is taught concerning prayer and by the spirit in which he is taught to pray; and his character in youth and maturity will depend upon the conception thus formed.

But before the child can be well taught the parent himself must have correct ideas. Too often with parents the highest notion of prayer is that it is asking God for blessings. This notion is the one commonly transmitted to children. Such a narrow view is hurtful. Every Christian ought to know that the root of true prayer is unselfishness, that prayer is not so much a key to God's storehouse of material

blessings as it is a ladder by which one may climb a little closer to his heavenly Father.

From the very beginning the child should be caused to know that God will not give his children everything asked for. The habit of teaching, without qualification, that we have only to ask him believingly for anything whatsoever in order to receive it is pernicious. Better tell the little one the plain truth—that to many of our prayers God will say no. The seed of truth sown in the little heart may grow slowly but it will bring forth righteousness of life. The seed of error will spring up more quickly perhaps, but its fruitage will be confusion and disbelief.

It is easy enough in ordinary cases to teach a child to say a prayer, but to teach him to pray is a different task. It is easy to cause him to ask God for what he wants, but it is hard to lead him to want what God wants him to have. But childhood is the period in which conformity to God's will can most easily be established. After years of willfulness and wickedness it is more difficult to learn the true inwardness of prayer which is a willingness to do God's will.

Teach the children to pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

### A Mind to Work.

It was often remarked that much of the wonderful success attending the meetings conducted by Mr. Moody was due to his power to get everybody to work. There are one hundred men who can do work for one man who can set others to work. Perhaps the greatest cause of failure to-day is our congregations is not that ministers lack of energy or ability, but that in many instances they lack that knowledge of men and power to command the service of men that is necessary in the good leader.

There is a wealth of raw material in every congregation. There is a dearth of trained workers in nine out of ten of our churches. There is perhaps not a congregation in the Dominion in which the minister would not like to enter upon additional work, if he had the men to undertake it. He has the men but not the knack of training them.

The scene of the rebuilding of the second temple is an inspiring one, even in this distant day. Amid overwhelming discouragements, with difficulties facing them that might have daunted a strong people, the people, under the leadership of one born to command accomplished marvellous things, for, it is significantly said, "the people had a mind to work." But the leader did not find them disposed to work, they were rather a weak dispirited people, not at all aware of the latent possibilities within them.

In every congregation there are possibilities undreamed of by the people.