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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14th, 1891

COMMENTING on the appointment of a new judge to the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, the editor of the *New York Christian Advocate* says that having been cross-examined for six hours by the learned gentleman while at the Bar he can testify that the new judge is "a man of honour, a gentleman, a student, accomplished and of a very sound judgment." We have heard of witnesses over here who came to a very different conclusion about cross-examiners in much less time than six hours.

NO doubt Mr. Plimsoll is a fine old English gentleman, a philanthropist and a tried friend of the British sailor, but it is a pity that he did not undertake his mission of mercy a little sooner. The farmers of Canada are having hard enough lines without being threatened with a stoppage of the cattle trade. This trade was worth \$8,000,000 last year to the farmer and about \$1,000,000 to the ship-owners. If the farmers are to be squeezed on one side by the McKinley Bill and on the other by the British Parliament through Mr. Plimsoll their lot will be a hard one. There should be enough of business ability in this country to regulate the trade and reduce the danger of transportation to a minimum.

A GENTLEMAN who interviewed Spurgeon not long ago made the following among other notes in his diary about the great London preacher:—

He preached yesterday on the occasion of the opening of the West London Mission. He is not quite satisfied with the machinery to be employed, but hopes for the best.

We reproduce this entry because it describes the mental attitude which a good man must often take in regard to many kinds of moral and religious work. The machinery is often faulty and the men running it as often distasteful, but the object aimed at may be good. One cannot afford to ignore much less oppose a good undertaking simply because the machinery is not of the best or the men working it not exactly up to the highest standard. It is a very difficult thing to say how defective men and machinery must be to justify a good man in refusing to co-operate. Spurgeon's plan is the right one. Help and hope for the best unless principle forbids. Machinery after all is but a means to an end.

THE *London Advertiser* says that much of whatever was satisfactory in the municipal elections in the Forest City, including the carrying of a by-law for the reduction of licenses, was accomplished by the union of the moral forces of the city, the churches being one of the principal forces. Our contemporary adds these reflections:—

If the Churches, representing the moral forces of the city are able, when they choose, to right that which is wrong, and to restrict that which is evil, it should never be forgotten that the responsibility is commensurate with the power. It may sound like a new doctrine that for all defects of our civic life, in their relation to the moral side of things, the Churches collectively are responsible; but can it be denied?

It should be remembered, however, that the Churches may not be as influential or united in all cities as they happily are in London. The Churches of New York were against Tammany in the last municipal contest in that city, but Tammany won. The Churches of Chicago could not close the saloons on Sabbath no matter how hard they tried. The right and only sure way is for good citizens to keep the roughs down from the first.

THERE were lively contests in many municipalities last week. That was right. Elections bring some inconveniences, but a brisk brush

at the polls is much better than public apathy. When offices go a-begging in either Church or State there is always something wrong. The lack of public spirit that shows itself in the absence of candidates for public positions is not a good sign. A self-governed people must always be willing to shoulder the responsibilities of self-government. Now let everybody understand that if the municipalities of Ontario are not well served during this year the people themselves are to blame. They had the privilege last week of selecting men to manage the municipal and school affairs, and if they did not make a good selection the fault is their own. We have in its simplest form government by the people, and if it is not for the people the people are to blame. No nation under heaven has more freedom in the management of its affairs than this province of Ontario. The problem we are solving every day is whether we are worthy of our privileges. These privileges cost much more than some who exercise them seem to know.

IN the good old times when the townships were filling up with settlers, when every village was supposed to be growing into a town and every town into a city, new congregations were formed and new mission stations opened in places where they were no more needed than a fifth wheel is needed by a waggon. The cure for almost every congregational ill in those days was "open a new station." The surest way to prove that you were a progressive evangelical Presbyterian was: start a new congregation or mission station. A good many of these congregations and mission stations will yet have to be united. Some of them should never have been separated. Sir Richard Cartwright states that in twenty-five of the best counties of Ontario there has been a falling off in the population of over 30,000 during the past ten years. The policy of the Church in the rural districts should be centralization. With enormous demands on our men and money in the North-West, new stations should never be opened in the older parts of Ontario unless really needed. No wise Presbytery will start a new case in the face of decreasing or stationary population while men are without the Gospel in the newer parts of the country.

A WRITER in the *Christian-at-Work* gives the following as a reason why citizens who vote cannot be received as members in full communion by the Covenanters:—

We do not receive into our communion those who vote at civil elections and hold office under the United States Constitution, because by doing so we become participants in great and aggravated sins. Does not our Government violate the law of God in the Sunday mail service, and in the license of the saloon, and in the laws of divorce? These evils are not merely incidental and necessary; they are legal, and sealed with the authority of the United States Government. We believe they who sit at the Lord's table should be clean from such offences.

And we believe the only way they can be clean from such offences is to vote against the people who commit them. But that is not all. The franchise is a trust, and the duties of this trust should be discharged as faithfully as the duties of any other. Besides, how can good men ever be put into public positions and boodlers kept out if all who sit at the Lord's table keep away from the polling booth? The municipal government of the city of New York is a fine illustration of what local government comes to when clean people let the reins slip out of their hands.

BY all means let the agitation in defence of "the rights of the witness" go vigorously on. The public have at one time and another heard quite enough about the rights of judges, the rights of counsel, the rights of litigants, the rights of jurors and of everybody else. The witness seems to be the only person in court who has no rights, or, if he has, whose rights no one is bound to respect. Just why any decent citizen, compelled by law to go into the witness box and sworn there to tell the whole truth, should be insulted and bullied and brow-beaten by a brassy legal practitioner is one of the peculiarities of our boasted civilization not easily explained. The outrage is all the more intolerable because the insulted witness if a ratepayer has to pay his full share of the expense incurred by keeping the court in existence. And the bill for the administration of justice is pretty heavy in this country. Why should a respectable citizen dread going into the witness box as much as he would dread the rack or thumbscrew? Mr. Mowat is head of the legal profession as well as Premier of Ontario, and he would add one more to the many good measures passed by him if he would devise some method by

which respectable citizens can go into the witness box without the risk of receiving cowardly insults.

DR. WALKER, of Dysart, Scotland, who writes such excellent letters to the *Interior*, made a tour in the United States last summer and worshipped ten Sabbaths in American churches. Here is what he tells the *Interior* about his experience in these churches:—

I spent ten Sabbaths in the United States, and during all of these (as I was forbidden to preach) I was a listener. It may have been my misfortune, but it is the fact that nowhere did I light upon an overflowing congregation; nor did I hear except once (in a Methodist church) any sermon delivered with extraordinary fervour. Again and again did we come upon respectable congregations, in which there was every appearance of devoutness and earnestness, and the sermons we heard were always excellent. But there was no fire sensible, and (it may have been our fault) but we came and went without ever being greatly stirred. It is more than likely that if an American traveller were to journey through Scotland in the like way, he would have a similar experience, but I am now speaking only of my own experience, and it may do good and not harm to state it. Certainly ministers alike with you and with us need to be reminded how much the life of the Church depends upon the fervour of their preaching.

We have heard Canadians say precisely the same thing about the churches in Scotland dozens of times. We always accounted for the disappointment on the theory that many Canadians used to think that nearly all the ministers in Scotland preached like Candlish and Guthrie. When they went to church a few times they found that there was only one Candlish and one Guthrie. Perhaps Dr. Walker expected too much from the American pulpit. And still it is not a little strange that not one sermon out of twenty—assuming that like a good Christian he went to church twice on each of the ten Sabbaths—stirred him. Perhaps the Scotch Doctor is hard to stir. Many Scotchmen are. One cannot help wondering if a stranger could hear twenty sermons while on a tour through Canada without being stirred. Everything would depend on what churches he happened to drop into. Some of ours are lively and some cold enough. Dr. Walker's reminder about fervour is much needed. The "icily proper" style is a symptom of spiritual death.

THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION AND THE SABBATH.

THROUGHOUT the United States there is much discussion whether the World's Fair to be held in Chicago in 1893 should be kept open or closed on the Sabbath. In the controversy there are three distinct views taken. The Christian element is clear and pronounced in its opposition to Sabbath opening; the opponents of the Sabbath are equally anxious for keeping the gates of the Exhibition open from the beginning to the close of the time for which it is to be held; while there is an indifferent class whose opinions are not very decided, but who mostly lean to the side that forms a partial opening on the Sabbath.

Most public Christian organizations that have as yet had an opportunity of pronouncing on the question have formulated resolutions emphatically condemning what they hold would be a desecration of the sacred day under a kind of national sanction. The religious press of the United States without exception has condemned in strong terms the proposed opening. As yet the matter is undecided. The directors of the Exhibition have not concluded whether it will be kept open or closed on Sabbath. They are evidently waiting to see in what direction the tide of public opinion will flow. To ascertain to some extent how the people think on the subject, the *New York Independent* has addressed to a number of Senators and Congressional representatives the question: "Shall we open the Columbian Exposition on Sunday?" To this fifteen Senators have replied. Of these eight are emphatic in their protest against Sunday opening; two have not made up their minds, and one only expresses a decided preference for opening on the first day of the week. The other four indicate their preference for the proposal because in their opinion it would confer a boon on the working poor who would have no opportunity of seeing the Exhibition except on the Sabbath day.

One hundred and four members of Congress responded to the *Independent's* request. Fifty of them, with more or less clear and decided expression, oppose Sunday opening. Only a few are pronounced in favour of having the Exhibition open seven days in the week. The majority of those who assent to the proposal qualify their opinions by suggesting restrictions that ought to be imposed on Sunday attendance. One Senator and several Congressional representatives suggest the holding of religious services in the Exhibition buildings, to be conducted