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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor.

Ottawa, Wednesday, Oct 9th, 1901.

There is a distinctively brighter tone in the reports from the fields this summer. There has not been any great change in the conditions about us, but we think there is a change in our attitude towards the work to be done. We are taking hold of it, we are beginning to accomplish something, and courage and confidence are returning. For some months we have been talking, and discussing what ought to be done. That is always disheartening work. Better far to take hold at the thing that lies next us, make a beginning, and so contribute to the bettering of what needs reforming in the world about us.

New York Presbyterianism has suffered severely this summer. Two of its most prominent and best loved ministers have suddenly passed from active labor here, to higher service with the Master. Dr. Babcock was a man greatly beloved, not only to those to whom he ministered, but by all who came to know him. Dr. Purvis, as pastor of Fifth Avenue Church had, a commanding place among the workers in that great city. Yet He who has called has already one prepared for the work they have laid down. He rules, and with infinite wisdom, though to us it may seem as if there was confusion and disaster in the work.

With regard to family worship, its value and importance, let us quote the opinion of an observant business man whose calling brought him into contact with people in many sections of the country. He said to the writer that in those places where family worship was generally observed, he noted a high degree of respect and courtesy among young people, not only towards their parents and superiors, but also towards strangers, something that was not observable to any great extent where family worship was the exception and not the rule. He was not a Presbyterian, but he did not hesitate to say that he found family worship to prevail very generally in rural districts mainly Presbyterian. Would it not be well if such testimony to the refining influence of family worship could apply to all Christian communities?

## PRACTICAL TRAINING.

This was the keynote of the address that the Moderator of the General Assembly gave to Professor Douglas on Wednesday of last week. We need men who know how to work. We have men who know how work ought to be done. Our young men are well equipped with knowledge when they leave the colleges of our Church, but do they know how to do the work. Are they practical men, or only theorists.

They are more than theorists. Almost every man of them has been in the active work, and has learned how to face some of the difficulties incident to the missionaries' life. But there is not one of them who will not in his heart admit that he is not yet skilful in his approach to men. He knows what he wants to say, but he does not know how best to say it. This does not mean that he cannot clothe his message in fitting language, but that he is unable to put his message in the light in which the man to whom he speaks will see it to advantage.

The study of men is not a part of the curriculum. It should be a part. Not that we can put it upon the course of studies, and make a Clair that shall take charge of this branch of training; but that during the course of study, opportunity shall be given the student to meet all classes, to see all phases of life, to study the problems that emerge in different conditions of life, and to learn what bearing the Gospel message has upon men everywhere. We need to study life. We should be able to put ourselves in the position of the man who is under the pressure of business for six days in the week. We should know something of the stress that comes upon those who must calculate each day how much they can spare for necessities, to whom an extra ride on the street cars is a luxury. We need to know something of the conditions that surround the children both in the home and school and playground. The business of the preacher is not done when he has carefully sought out his message and spoken it. Has it reached the mark? Has he been skilful in directing it?

It has often been said that the minister is a poor business man. The ground for this statement is not that the minister has been met in business, and has shewn poor business ability, but that in his addresses to his people on subjects where the business of the world is touched, he shews himself ignorant of the conditions that prevail, and unable to adapt his message to the need of the men who live in these conditions. So they call him impractical, because he fails to understand the conditions of life that to them are everyday conditions. There is need for the study of men if the minister is to be God's messenger to men in all the walks of life.

Religious journalism is distinctly the poorer because of the death of Dr. Gray of The Interior. Every sentence he wrote was imbued with his own life, and the personality it breathed was a singularly kindly one. He struck hard at times, but it was always a fair blow; and was always aimed at the thing he considered an evil, or less worthy, never at the man. He has done much to enrich the influence of the religious press.

## A NOTE OF WARNING.

Many journals in the United States—notably the religious and denominational journals—are drawing lessons for the American people from the assassination of the late President McKinley, some of which may apply with more or less force to our own country. One writer in the Lutheran Observer points to the lax administration of criminal laws as giving direct encouragement to the criminal classes to hold human life cheaply. He says:

"Murder, lynching, and anarchism are on the increase. Yet at the same time we are boasting of high ideals and intellectual and moral progress. What is the cause then of this increase in crime? One of the reasons is, I think, the lax administration of the laws. Many murderers do not receive the punishment their crimes justly deserve. For sentimental reasons, the almost unlimited power of money, and, in some instances it must be feared, the miscarriage of justice, capital punishment is administered in very few cases. Terms of imprisonment are made shorter than they should be. Then after the murderer is tried at a great expense to the state, and sentenced, he is pardoned out, after serving a few years, by the governor. And the latter's reasons may be merely sentimental or political. Hence men have little fear, especially if they have plenty of money or political influence, of receiving adequate punishment for the killing of any person who crosses their path."

It may be said that we do things better in Canada, at least in so far as the graver criminal offences are concerned; but it is not a fact that in many of our cities there is a very lax administration of many municipal laws, which, if permitted to continue, will breed a contempt for all law; and that cannot fail in time to deaden public opinion and give encouragement to criminals? Take, for instance, the laws designed to restrict and control the liquor traffic. Is it not a fact that in many places offences against these laws are inadequately enforced, sometimes not enforced at all. Why? Because those engaged in the liquor traffic have sufficient influence over members of city and municipal councils and the officials appointed by them, to secure a large degree of immunity from the exposure and punishment which their violations of law deserve. And Christian men, who should strive for pure and righteous civic government, look complacently on without even uttering a protest while law and order are thus being trampled upon. Christian men cannot permit this thing to go on indefinitely without suffering for it. When law and order are brought into contempt by lax enforcement or non-enforcement, the criminal classes will grow bolder, and then we may expect them to have less and less fear for the criminal laws of our country. The American people, in the name of liberty, nourished the "viper" anarchy and in the assassination of their President are "feeling the pain of its sting," as is well expressed by the writer quoted above. "Has not our government been too lenient in its treatment of murderers, lynchers and anarchists?" He asks, let the people of Canada take warning that the consequences of not enforcing law are certain, some day or other to come home to them in a very severe and costly fashion.

The latest news from Kingston respecting the Rev. Principal Grant's condition is more encouraging. He takes nourishment, and is resting better. His physicians are hopeful,