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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30th, 1889.

COMPLAINTS are often made and justly made at the manner in which precious time is often wasted in Church courts by an incessant flow of verbiage about little or nothing. Unfavourable comparisons in this regard are sometimes made between Church and law courts. The clerical consumers of time have now a good chance to score. It took seven weeks to select the jury that is trying the slayers of Dr. Cronin.

TEN Presbyteries in the American Church have reported on Revision—four for and six against. Some very influential Presbyteries have voted nay and there may be more of that class to vote on the same side. The *Christian-at-Work* makes this oracular statement: "A great deal depends on the voice of New York and Brooklyn in this matter." Indeed! Have the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago and other places no minds of their own? The Cockney assumption of our contemporary finds an exact parallel in the assumption that Toronto is Ontario and that the Presbytery of Toronto is the Presbyterianism of Canada.

THE action of a neighbouring Episcopal congregation in reducing the salary offered their minister to \$1 per annum, and the tactics adopted by the Anti-Federationists in the Methodist Church, as well as a good deal that takes place in many other quarters may tempt people to ask whether professing Christians can afford to denounce politicians in the savage terms in which they are often denounced by many who lay claim to very superior piety. Supposing a lively politician should present the world with a graphic account of all the church quarrels, clerical scandals, cases of discipline, clerical suspensions, depositions and other matters of that kind that have taken place in Canada during the last year!

DR. VAN DYKE, one of the front rank men in the army of Revisionists, makes a capital point when he tells the opponents of Revision that if they really are afraid the Confession will be injured the best course for them is to join the movement and help to keep the Revision within conservative limits. There is a world of good sense in that suggestion. It is generally much easier to regulate a movement from the inside than from the outside. A man like Dr. Shedd, who opposes Revision on grounds of expediency, and on these alone, can do far more to keep the movement within safe limits by taking part in it than by standing aloof and throwing stones at those who are doing the work. All this on the assumption that Revision must come.

REFERRING to the election of some excellent members of the American Board of Foreign Missions the *Christian-at-Work* says no "prospective methods were pursued in the election." Our excellent contemporary no doubt means that neither the gentlemen elected nor their friends did any canvassing. Canvassing, however, is not a pleasant work to use in connection with religious affairs. It savours too much of politics and is hardly respectable enough to describe the methods of clergymen when they are after some position. When you speak about the doings of mere politicians always say canvassing, or wire-pulling or something of that kind, but when you describe the same acts performed by a minister always be careful to say "prospective methods;" prospective methods is good.

THERE seems to be an immense volume of law business this autumn. Several of the judges on circuit have been unable to get through their business in the time allowed for holding court and cases were laid over or deputy-judges left to do the

work. It is not probable that Ontario people like going to law now better than they ever did. The business of the country is increasing and that may account for increased litigation. The more business the more misunderstandings and the more misunderstandings the more law-suits. It is idle to say that many of the disputes that swell assize records might be amicably settled. Of course they might and so might a thousand other good things be done if people would only do them. People might live without Church quarrels but some of them don't. And a Church quarrel is a much worse thing than an ordinary law-suit.

DR. STORRS closed a splendid speech at the late meeting of the American Board of Foreign Missions with the following fine sentence:

"I believe that the child is now born who will see the time when commerce and Christianity, equally earth-embracing in their arms, and advancing in majestic harmony, shall possess the whole earth; when holiness to the Lord shall be upon the heels of those swift horses of modern commerce, whose race-course is the ocean; when the revolving wheels of every railway and of every steamship shall have the living spirit of truth and of grace within them, and when the trumpets of commerce, which are wakening the world on every barbaric shore to new ideas and new aspirations, shall carry to all those tribes the message of the angel of Bethlehem. God hasten it in his time."

Dr. Storrs is a long way past the "dead line of fifty" but his heart is as warm and his tongue as eloquent as ever. A few ringing sentences from a man like him go a long way to counteract the croaking of the croakers who seem to delight in saying that missions are a failure and that the world is getting worse.

WHETHER the child is now born that will see the Gospel preached throughout the whole world or not the child is born and perhaps going to school who will see the North West the principal part of Canada. Fifty years hence Winnipeg, or perhaps some city further west may be the commercial capital of the Dominion. The Presbyterians of Canada have done at least two wise things—one was to unite and the other was to throw their Home Mission energies largely into Manitoba and the North West. The foundation work done there if vigorously built upon, will tell in favour of Presbyterianism a century hence. More tourists from all parts of the world have crossed the continent on Canadian soil this summer than crossed in any ten previous years. They were all kinds of men and came from all parts of the world. We have yet to hear of one who did not say that Canada has a noble heritage and a great future. The men who laid the foundation of Presbyterianism in our prairie country will receive due attention from some future Dr. Gregg when the history of the Church is being written.

PRINCIPAL RAINY made a remark in his address to the students of Knox College the other day which every Canadian Presbyterian should embalm in his heart, his memory, his conscience, and every other good place. The possible limits of Presbyterian growth, said the Principal, can easily be defined in Ireland and Scotland so far as numbers are concerned. Nearly everybody in Scotland is a Presbyterian now and if all those who are not Presbyterians should become Presbyterians to-morrow we know how many there would be. Suppose all the people of Ireland were to become Presbyterians—Catholics and all—we could tell the exact number. There is a limit to the resources of these countries and the population is more likely to decrease than to increase. But who can fix the numerical limits of the Presbyterian Church in Canada? The North-West may yet be the Greater Britain. Who, as Dr. Rainy asked, would think of setting bounds to the Presbyterians of the United States? Practically there is no limit to the work that God has given us. The history of churches does not furnish a single instance in which a denomination was given a fairer field and better opportunities than God has given to the Presbyterians of Canada. Let us go up and possess the land; we are well able to do it.

SABBATH SCHOOL WORK.

TO all interested in the religious training of the young the meetings held in Toronto last week were of more than ordinary importance. The General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee met in this city, at which prominent Sabbath school workers

from St. John, N.B., and Winnipeg, with representatives from intermediate points were present. The chief work accomplished at this meeting was the complete organization of the scheme for higher religious education, providing for regular examinations at stated times of all who desire to compete for the prizes and diplomas to be given. So useful and so successful has this method proved in Presbyterian Churches in older lands that the committee are completely justified in their endeavour to secure its establishment in the Canadian Church. The scheme, moreover, has received the sanction of the General Assembly and the cordial approval of those who are most intimately conversant with Sabbath school work, so that the best results from the practical working of the scheme may be confidently anticipated. Ministers, Sabbath school superintendents and teachers will doubtless give it their most hearty support and assistance, as to a large extent its success or failure will depend upon the attitude they assume in relation to it.

The other noteworthy event of the week in connection with Sabbath school work was the annual convention of the Ontario Sabbath School Association which has now been in existence for a quarter of a century. The meeting was regarded as one of the most successful yet held, and if the number of delegates attending, the interest evoked and the practical character of the proceedings are taken into account the estimate cannot be said to be exaggerated. The opening day was occupied with the president's address, the hearing of reports, an address by Mr. William Reynolds, of Peoria, President of the International Convention, addresses of welcome and reports by gentlemen who had attended the World's Convention in London. The use of lesson helps was discussed the first day. While all did not agree as to their value, there was unanimity in the opinion that their general use was tending to the displacement of the Scriptures in the Sabbath school, a result in itself very undesirable. Several of the speakers advised that such helps should not be taken to the school at all, while a man of excellent judgment and large experience, the Rev. James McEwan, of Lakefield, gave as a reason for the extensive use of lesson helps that teachers and scholars take the easiest methods of doing things. It is obvious that if all helps are to be left outside the class-room, much of the teaching must be necessarily vague and inaccurate. It is not always easy to retain in the memory definite facts and details illustrative of the lesson without some kind of mechanical aid. A glance at lesson notes may be a sufficient aid to memory, and, therefore, helpful to the character of the teaching imparted. Perhaps the better way would be for both teachers and scholars in their preparation of the lesson to note down all important particulars for themselves; the process would help to imprint facts on the memory, and at all events a reference to these notes could not be regarded as improper. The Bible, however, should be used as the principal text-book in the Sunday school. Every pupil ought to be familiar with the Bible and should be able to refer easily to any passage that may be cited. That such familiarity is by no means as common as it should be might readily be tested in an average congregation when the minister announces that his text has been selected from one of the minor prophets for instance. Not a few are searching for the book named long after the preacher has branched out into his introduction, and some there are who suppose that several of the worshippers who ought to be well acquainted with their Bibles give up the task, satisfied that although they have not found the text it forms a part of Sacred Scripture.

An important object the Association has in view is the more complete organization of Sunday school work throughout the province. For this end the establishment of township and county associations is urgently recommended, all brought into harmonious working in connection with the provincial Association. Arrangements were made for procuring complete and accurate statistical returns if possible from every school in the province. The general secretary stated that there were still about 250,000 Protestant children outside the pale of Sunday school work. In the outlying northern districts of the province as yet Sabbath school facilities were few and he made the excellent suggestion that parents in these sparsely settled regions should be supplied with such aids as would make each family circle a miniature Sabbath school. Delegates from other associations were heard at the afternoon meeting on Wednesday. Judge Moore, of New York, was able to tell the Convention that of the 1,750,000 children in that State 1,000,000 were attending Sunday school. Mr. S. J. Parsons, of New Brunswick, gave encouraging reports of the work in the Maritime Provinces and Dr. A. B. Mackay, of Montreal, told that in the