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The Canada Presbyterian.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6TH, 1894.

READING over the debates in the heresy trials that took place at the American Assembly, one cannot help saying what a pity it is that all this time, labour and undoubted talent should not be employed in a more useful way. The man who occasions and encourages protracted litigation in the church of God, takes a tremendous responsibility upon himself.

OUR Methodist neighbors have a minister who claims that he was ordained as an evangelist and can therefore do as he pleases. That brother will soon find his mistake. If there is only one church that does not allow its ministers to do as they please, that church is the Methodist. And their neighbors respect them all the more because they respect their own laws.

THE Patriarch of *The Interior* says, "The rule is that a writer cannot be an orator, nor an orator a writer. A few men have cultivated both arts successfully, though I know of no highly effective orator or writer who is both." Did you never hear of a man named William Ewart Gladstone who has been a highly effective orator and writer for half a century. He lives in England and has been connected with the government of that country.

THERE never was a dispute in a congregation or Presbytery or between two Christian men that more grace might not have settled without an appeal to any ecclesiastical or civil tribunal. The principles of the New Testament if fairly applied can settle any quarrel. The trouble is that when men begin to fight from motives of personal hate or love of victory, they forget all about the New Testament, or use it only to fortify their own position.

SIR JOHN THOMPSON did a wise thing last week when he granted a respite to the condemned man, Mackwherrel. The evidence on which the prisoner was convicted was not conclusive beyond all reasonable doubt. The Crown always has immense advantages in court over a prisoner with little or no money. It is almost impossible for a poor man to retain the highest legal talent and collect evidence as the Crown can always do. Such being the case, it is well to proceed slowly when a human life is at stake.

PRINCIPAL GRANT should keep anonymous letters and post cards he receives about that interview with the *Globe* and publish them in the form of a book along with those received during the Plebiscite campaign. Nobody has any idea of the amount and richness of the anonymous literature of this country. The number of manly, good people who think it a Christian duty to stab in the dark

with an anonymous post card is simply marvellous. People in private life have no idea of the wealth of our anonymous writers.

HIGH class British statesmen never allow political differences to interfere with their social intercourse. Mr. Balfour, the Opposition leader, and the very ideal of a high-toned Tory, was at Mr. Asquith's wedding the other day, and along with him were a goodly number of his strongest supporters in the House. Our Canadian political warfare is modeled mainly after the Home Rule style, rather than after the British idea. In fact, some of our people do things that would make an average Irish Home Ruler blush to the roots of his hair. Is it any wonder that British statesmen look upon Colonial politics with dignified contempt. We have the lowest Home Rule tactics unredeemed by the physical courage of the Irish Home Ruler.

THE old commonplace about "laying aside all party differences and working for the common good of the country," is being finely illustrated at Washington just now. Some of the senators of both parties have laid aside party differences, but they are working not for the good of the country. They are arranging the tariff to suit their own individual interests. Democrat and Republican senators linger in loving embrace over fiscal arrangements that will make them rich while the country fairly staggers under the weight of depression largely caused by delay and uncertainty in regard to the tariff. Pilate and Herod have ceased to speak about party in order that they may fix the duties so that they and their friends may become millionaires. "Sink all party feeling and work for the good of the country" is a fine enough phrase, but, as a matter of fact, some men never need watching so much as when they talk about the common good of the country. In that respect they exactly resemble the professing Christians who are always talking about "abolishing denominational differences." Always watch the man who is everlastingly talking about meeting on a common platform and abolishing all denominational distinctions. Nine times out of ten he is the most accomplished sheep stealer in the community.

IT was scarcely necessary for Dr. Torrance to tell us, as he did in our last issue, that Dr. Laing is not the author of the Book of Forms in the sense in which Forbes is the author of the Digest. We saw the Book of Forms several times when it was in course of preparation and are reasonably familiar with its progress through committees, presbyteries and General Assembly. Dr. Laing was convener of the Committee of Assembly that had the work in charge, and like every other convener had to do the heavy end of the work. The question, however, is not who made the book but what does section 100 of the book, mean. It reads thus:—The Moderator is a minister and is chosen at each ordinary meeting by an open vote. Now we know on the best possible authority that after careful consideration of the language to be used the word "is" was inserted in this section instead of "shall" or "must" for the express purpose of leaving the matter open—for the express purpose of doing exactly the opposite of what Dr. Torrance says the section does. The authors simply stated the facts—they gave no instructions much less did they lay down a hard and fast rule. They said the Moderator is a minister and he is elected by open vote at each ordinary meeting, but were very careful not to say he "must" or "shall" be a minister. But supposing they had laid down a rule the Synods would not then be bound to elect a minister as Moderator. The Book of Forms was adopted and approved by the Assembly as a "useful guide" and nothing more. A "useful guide" is not a rule of law.

WE give a parting word or two about the General Assembly, and to satisfy enquiring friends. Those going to the General Assembly from Ontario and Quebec must go so on the Standard Certificate plan, that is, buy a first-class ticket, get the Standard Certificate from the agent filled up and signed, hand this certificate to Mr. Burns on arrival at St. John. The revising officer will certify if the 300 attend and the return will be free. Commissioners from the Northwest will travel on all-round tickets. They will get a certificate from their Presbytery clerk, which, with a sight of their ticket, will suffice. Commissioners in the Maritime Provinces and others visiting the General Assembly, will re-

ceive certificates from the Presbytery clerk, which will enable them to get their tickets counted among the "300." All tickets and certificates should be handed in to Mr. Burns, as soon after arrival as possible, so that arrangements may be made to have the revising officer attest the whole. Remember the excursion to Boston, \$7 return. Excursion to Grand Pre, Halifax and intermediate points and return, \$4.50 to Halifax. Other side trips are granted to stations on the C. P. R. Folders bearing this information are found at all stations. Special rates from Hamilton, London, Paris, Ingersoll, St. Thomas, Chatham, Windsor, Sarnia, Mt. Forest, etc. See that you have an envelope and card with your name on it which to put your certificate.

"WOE unto you when all men speak well of you," is one of the woes that Rev. Principal Grant need not fear. It is rather hard for a clergyman to know how to act at an election time. If he says nothing and does not even vote, he will almost certainly incur the dislike or contempt of strong partisans on either side; and he is sure to bring upon himself hatred, or even persecution from one side or other if he dares to have or express an opinion on political matters and act upon it. The Principal not only has opinions upon the present state of things in the Province politically, but has dared very frankly to express them, and what is worse, they are likely to have a good deal of weight in the issue of the contest now going on. For this he has incurred the wrath of one of the rather notorious minor journals of this city, which from time to time has honored Principal Caven also with its diatribes. In this case, as usual, not having arguments, it takes to its more congenial work of calling names. Principal Grant is too well known, especially as one who glories in being a Canadian, to be hurt by such exhibition of coarse malevolence. There are some journals of such a character that one would be ashamed to be commended by them which it is an honor to have against one, and that referred to is conspicuous amongst that class. It can hurt neither Principal Grant, nor Mr. Meredith, nor Sir Oliver Mowat to call them names, which, do it who may, is a very small occupation, and is on the face of it a confession of weakness.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE UNITED STATES, NORTH.

WE now give a more complete, though necessarily very brief synopsis of the proceedings of this greatest member of the large Presbyterian family. This is the one hundred and sixth Assembly which has been held; its meeting place was Saratoga, and the new Moderator, Rev. Dr. Mutchmore of the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. After a brief opening address business was proceeded with. The report of *The Church at Home and Abroad*, which corresponds to our *Record*, but larger and four times the price, gave its circulation as 18,542, which is a marked advance, and the future looks hopeful for an increasing circulation. It may be said here once for all that the "hard times" are referred to in almost every report as affecting unfavourably the incomes of all the Boards.

The report on Church Unity, which refers to a proposal for the federation of the various Presbyterian churches, was presented by Rev. Dr. Smith. A concentration of common work is designed, leaving every member of the federation to retain its distinctive individuality, its jurisdiction and its rights. This report and its recommendations were remitted to the standing committee on church polity.

The report on Sabbath Observance gave a comprehensive review of the present state of the Sabbath question, what had been done during the year, and noted the chief hindrances to the proper observance of the Lord's day. We have already in a former issue referred to this. We have also noticed the next report, that on the relation of the theological seminaries to the Assembly and how this was settled. This was one of the difficult, complicated and keenly debated subjects which came up for consideration.

An overture on the reunion of the churches North and South was reported and a committee of nine was appointed to confer with a like committee of the Southern church, which before the Assembly rose replied courteously to the proposal, but declined for the present to entertain it.