

Our Young People

For Dominion Presbyterian.

Our Own Church: the Old Century and the New.

BY WOODFORD.

Topic.—The "gathering together" of the Presbyterian Church in Canada as it exists at the present time, took place in 1875. Of all the secessions and disruptions that occurred before 1875 we shall not speak; our present condition justifies us in speaking rather of union. By 1868 we find then that six unions had taken place, making four Synods—the Synod of the Lower Provinces, the Synod of the Maritime Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland, the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church, and the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland. In 1875 between these four bodies there was consummated a seventh union, the result of which was the present Presbyterian Church in Canada. It must never be forgotten that devotion to Christ, earnestness of purpose in the work of spreading the gospel, the crying needs of the country, and not mere expediency or vain glory were the factors in promoting this union. Had there been less earnestness, less devotion to Him who is Lord and Master of us all the union would never have been so happily, so blessedly consummated. With us as with the church at Antioch, the gathering together was an illustration of the saying, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

MONDAY.—A comparison of the Presbyterian church after the union with "the infant church" shows many pleasing points of similarity. The great majority of Presbyterians in Canada, in a spirit that was and shall be forever inspiring, came together in 1875 as brethren in the Lord. That this was a wise course to pursue the steady growth of the church in ministers, members and adherents, in its college and missionary work, and in its pecuniary resources, clearly proves. There are now the names of 1,488 ordained ministers, besides those of 472 unordained home and foreign missionaries, on the roll of the church, as compared with 672 names then; the number of communicants has increased from 88,228 in 1875 to 212,026 in 1899; the contributions for all purposes now total \$2,511,175 as compared with \$972,672 for the year after the union. In the 2,419 Sabbath schools of our church there are 160,105 scholars, and 19,666 teachers. There are now 1082 Young People's Societies with a membership of 36,189.

TUESDAY.—What a sense of nearness to God, and to one another, of brotherliness, this spiritual union begets. For convenience of administration we have in our church an Eastern and a Western

section. When the fathers and brethren foregather the east and the west are one, and even foreign mission fields are spoken of as part and parcel of the Canada Presbyterian church. Men from Eastern and Central Canada labor in and for the west; the stalwarts of the west are equally welcome in the east (only it is hard work to wear a man away from the witchery of the west). Prairies and mountains and oceans, it is evident at meetings of the General Assembly, are paltry obstacles to the lively interest of each and all in the work of the church as a whole. In Christ Jesus the far off are indeed made nigh; and in truth there is no middle wall of partition; none are strangers and foreigners, who are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

WEDNESDAY.—It is not surprising that a church animated by such a spirit should go on from strength to strength. During the century there have been valleys of weeping for individuals and congregations to pass through. What discouragements and hardships the pioneers had and have to encounter! How great is the goodness of the Lord with which they were strengthened! Of what they received they have handed much down to us. Shall we give such an account of our stewardship as they did, and will succeeding generations rise up and call us blessed? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

THURSDAY.—"To work is to pray" said a saint of olden time. There is need of much activity to the end that the union so happily consummated in 1875 may ever be being fulfilled. What a field for activity lies ready for young and active brains in the mission work of our church! Hearty support is needed for the North-West Church and Home Building Fund, Augmentation, Mission to Lumbermen, to the Indians of the North-West, to the dwellers in the New Hebrides, in Trinidad and St. Lucia, in Demerara, in Formosa, in Honan, in Central India. United effort in behalf of such work will indeed be blessed of the Father, to the strengthening of the church, as of each individual helping and being helped.

FRIDAY.—If in the past there is so much to be thankful for, surely the duty for the present and for the future is to offer service well-pleasing to God. Rome fell when her sons dawdled at home in luxury instead of following in the footsteps of them who founded the kingdom—extending the territory, and keeping in subjection by ruling wisely the people that had been conquered. Greece fell

when those who had been handed down the findings of statesmen and philosophers and artists became "thumb-twiddlers," priding themselves on the heritage without in anyway seeking to practise or improve upon the same. If we are to be worthy sons of worthy sires, if what we have we are to hold, this can only be when work undertaken is supported, and when what offers of what is new is taken as ours is the ability.

SATURDAY.—It is the nobility of loyalty there is in humanity that speaks in the words of one of Shakespeare's characters: "He! I a dozen sons each in my love alike, I had rather have eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action." There is surely much in the history of our church in this as in eighteen previous centuries to make our loyalty quite as great. The essence of the sacredness of life is indeed concentrated in the history of the church. And whether the time we look back to be the united church of 1875 or to the different wings of the Presbyterian army before this, or to covenanting Scotland, or to the period of the Reformation, or to the small gathering in the upper room in Jerusalem, the church, perhaps, in particular ages, or centuries, known by different names, is one in Christ Jesus, has ever been and is going on from strength to strength, has had and has the power of sanctifying every legitimate union, and as so blessed by God the responsibility is so great that the same can only be said to be had respect to when the truest loyalty to the church prevails.

The Old Century and the New.

- Mon., Dec. 4. The infant church. Acts 2:11-17.
 Tues., Dec. 5. "In Jesus Christ." Eph. 2:13-22.
 Wed., Dec. 6. From strength to strength. Ps. 81.
 Thurs., Dec. 7. In earth and heaven. Eph. 3:14-21.
 Fri., Dec. 8. The church's responsibility. Heb. 12:12-29.
 Sat., Dec. 9. Loyalty to our church. Ps. 122.
 Sun., Dec. 10. Topic: Our own church; the old century and the new. Acts 1:19-28.

"The Living God."

How many times we find this expression in the Holy Scriptures. And it is just the very thing we are practically prone to lose sight of. We know that it is written, "The Living God;" we may speak about him as "the living God;" but in our daily life there is scarcely an thing we practically so much lose sight of as the fact that God is "the living God," and that he is now whatever he was three thousand years ago; that he has the same sovereign power, the same saving love towards those who love and serve him as ever he had, and that he will do for them what he did for those two thousand, three thousand, four thousand years ago, simply because he is "the living God," the unchanging One, the same as ever he was.

Oh how, therefore, we should confide in him, and in our darkest moments and in our greatest trials and in our heaviest difficulties and afflictions should never lose sight of the fact that he is still "the living God," and ever will be "the living God."—George Muller.