

selves, but all those who happen to come in hearing of their voices. A member of Mr. Sankey's singing class said to him when she was dying she owed her conversion to the hymn "I am so glad that Jesus loves me," and this girl was his first convert, and many eminent divines owe their conversion to the singing of a child, and when this is true Christian workers can now see the great importance of the words attached to the music. The stream cannot rise higher than its fountain, and I am sorry a number of the hymns contain so little of gospel or saving truth. The tune may be pleasing when all the parts are sustained, but the words without the music are stubble and chaff instead of good food for the soul. At the bed-side "Twenty-third Psalm," "Rock of Ages," "Jesus lover of my Soul," and others are worth a score of some of the hymns that are used. In short the gospel must be in the hymns before we can sing it into the hearts of the scholars. Who can sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" without feeling himself drawn in adoration to his Maker, or "What a friend we have in Jesus" without feeling the desirability of such a friend, or "He gave His life for me" without thinking it a precious gift. Again, I believe in having one tune for one set of words and that they should never be separated, in order that when we hear the tune our minds are associated with the words, and thus the singer makes it his own; and it is to be deplored that there is a tendency to mutilate the tunes composed by the old music masters with certainly no improvement in the composition either. And this thought suggests another enquiry, viz.: What hymns shall be used in our Sabbath schools? And I approach this point with diffidence, being aware of the great diversity of opinion and practice. In very many schools the Union Hymns and the like are used which are arranged and selected for schools. The great advantage is thought to be that in such a selection you can have a variety and that they are altered and rendered simple and thus adapted to childhood. These two objects are probably attained, but I am not sure but that is at too great a sacrifice; do you not think it wise that the child should learn to be familiar with the hymns used in the church and from which he will sing all his life, and thus have his earliest associations connected and linked in with what he will use in the house of God? And then as to the simplicity of the selected hymns, I am aware of all that can be said in their favour; but let me ask if their simplicity is not principally effected by altering some of our most beautiful hymns, such hymns as we have in our churches on the Sabbath? A scholar will learn a tune in the school and he goes to his father's pew and hears it sung as the author wrote it unaltered, and it is quite likely the tune gives him no pleasure and it will only serve as a mixer; and further, it is possible to have too great a variety, and I am not sure that a school requires it. How is it with the Christian? Is he ever tired of singing "Come, Holy Spirit Heavenly Dove," "Just as I am without one plea," "What a friend we have in Jesus," and such like? Do we not prefer at our sweetest meeting to sing over the songs which we know and thus give pleasure in recalling the dear old times. I would offer the following hints:—

1. To use the words of a hymn as it reads in the church hymn book and which they will probably use through life.
2. To have the selection of hymns very limited, so that the whole school may soon learn them and have them at their command.
3. To be very careful always to have the same tune and the same words used together. There is great advantage in this, children learn very much from repetition, and tunes and words thus connected always bring pleasurable associations to the mind. As to the number of hymns to be used during a service I would leave that to the discretion of the superintendent, who should remember that the young minds can only stand a limited amount of serious talk, and music should come in as a change and relief at an opportune time and as often as practicable, and I would say not less than five times during an exercise of one and a-quarter hours in length. These hymns should bear on the lesson, provided the school can sing them with life and energy; if not, sing familiar tunes, but it is very seldom that one hymn at least cannot be found which bears on the lesson and is known to the school.

I believe that the ideal method of conducting the singing is to have a precentor, assisted by a cornet or organ, who will stand before the school and start the tune and give the proper time to the choristers, as it is wonderful the amount of magnetism a leader of this nature has and the volume of music and life he can create in those before him.

Next best, I would place the ordinary choir with a cornet to take a strong lead, and where a cornet player is not conveniently available, why a precentor or simply a choir should be used.

Nowadays when by our lesson helps we know a week in advance the lesson, I would recommend a practice through the week or a ten-minute practice after the school exercises. This can be accomplished, and if all the scholars do not remain it will pay to stay ten minutes with those who do. Do not stay a quarter of an hour for practice, that seems long, but simply ten minutes, and start promptly and close just as promptly, and the person who takes this practice will, I feel certain, be gratified with the result. He should use a black-board and give five minutes to the notes, but in practice it may be found to advantage simply to learn the tunes. And for the smaller schools in the country surely some one lady or gentleman is able to sing through a simple hymn; and by securing their assistance and if they go prayerfully and bravely into this matter, they will succeed by limiting the number of the hymns and holding a short practice, and they should make the tunes cheerful and bright by singing them

faster and with some vigour, and avoid this slow lifeless pulling out of the notes that we find in some of the schools, always remembering that a cheerful school carries with it elements of success.

This practice can be strengthened by the parent encouraging the children to attend it and better by having singing at their family devotions at home. The good old Puritans, Scotch Covenanters and others by thus continuing singing in all their devotions earned the name of "Psalm-singing generations" and set an example well worthy the imitation of the homes in Manitoba. I think in the matter of improved singing in the schools that our neighbours across the line should be commended for their efforts to popularize good singing.

And in closing I would remind the meeting that the soul of man is so delighted with music that the highest and sweetest emblem by which inspiration could describe Heaven is that of "ten thousand times ten thousand" angels and men joined in one mighty choir before the throne of God and all unitedly praising Him for ever and for ever. And now I ask, should singing not have a prominent place in the very nursery of the church, the Sabbath school?

G. W. S. MATHESON.

GLADSTONE'S INDICIMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

MR. EDITOR,—In a recent issue of the *Review of Reviews* an account is given by Mr. Stead, editor of the *Review*, of an interview he had held with the distinguished statesman, in which the latter, speaking of the condition of the Christian Church in England, and of Christian ministers in general, expressed himself in very plain and pointed terms as to what he regarded one of the grand defects of the preaching of the present day. To put the point clearly before your readers, let me quote Gladstone's own words as given by Mr. Stead:—

Mr. Gladstone went on to remark, with increased solemnity, that he had one thing against the clergy of the Establishment both in towns and country—they were not severe enough upon their congregations; they did not sufficiently lay upon the consciences of their hearers their moral obligations; did not sufficiently probe their lives and bring up all their actions to the bar of conscience. He thought the people needed a class of sermons such as that one which, a few years ago, put Lord Melbourne into a flaming rage, the preacher having insisted that he, who had always upheld the Church and supported the clergy, should apply religion to his own private life! He expressed the fear that the clergy both of the Nonconformist Churches and of the Establishment were afraid to deal faithfully with their hearers. Mr. Spurgeon, he knew, had not been, but he still thought there was not enough of such "searching preaching" in any of the English pulpits.

Such weighty words from so distinguished an occupant of the pew are well worthy of being pondered in Canada as well as in England. I believe there is too good ground for such a remonstrance from the pew to the pulpit on this side the Atlantic. And further, Gladstone indirectly reads a good sound lesson to those hearers who find fault with their pastors for faithfully proclaiming the truth on questions of duty.

W. T. McMULLEN.

Woodstock, June 20, 1892.

TIME LIMIT TO THE ELDERSHIP.

MR. EDITOR, "An Elder's" argument in a recent number of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN regarding the advisability of a Time Limit for the office of the Eldership will meet with general approval. The suggestion is a good one, not only that congregations may be properly and efficiently represented in the council of the Church, but because sessions as at present constituted are a positive hindrance to the prosperity of congregations. It is no secret that Presbyterians everywhere recognize this to be the case. The majority of our sessions are composed of men who rest contented in the knowledge that they have what is called the spiritual oversight of congregations, but, excepting the duties of distributing the elements at sacramental services, it is not easy to show that they perform any other duties whatever. Anyone would have no difficulty in pointing out congregations with bodies of elders in which scarcely a man can be said to fill the sacred office with any degree of satisfaction. I know of sessions the majority of whose members have not for years attended the weekly prayer meeting, and whose voices were never heard in petition in any public assemblage nor even in the homes of any of the people, and who are never known to allude to spiritual matters by any chance whatever. I know of elders who pointedly decline or ask to be excused when invited to read a chapter or pray by the aged and infirm, who were never known to patronize a Christian Endeavour meeting, to encourage the young people in their work, and who never spend a moment before the morning service with their pastor to cheer or comfort him. Why many of these good but very conservative old men ever allowed themselves to be nominated when they must be conscious of their own unfitness, either in spiritual or administrative ability of any kind passes comprehension, but the blindness and want of common sense on the part of the people who selected them is none the less remarkable. How is it possible for spiritual life and healthy, active conditions to exist under such oversight? The whole burden is thrown upon the pastor, and how they manage to carry on the work for any length of time without breaking down under a load of discouragement is a marvel to business men who in the ordinary affairs of life find it necessary to use some degree of snap and vigour.

By all means let some of our Church lawyers bring in a Bill to alter the composition of this Congregational Senate. Life membership in the Senate is not now proving a benefit to the Church, and Presbyterianism is not the aggressive, active influence it ought to be in gathering in the "lapsed" and non-church people or the careless ones, were the spiritual overseers alive to the duties of their office. If at least one-half of the eldership of the Canada Presbyterian Church were to be elected every five years, and the representative to the councils to be elected annually, the lay membership would be a vastly more potent influence for good than it now is. I know that my experience is the same as Presbyterians every where who wish to see more vigour displayed in our Church work, and I hope others will speak out on this subject.

A MANAGER.

THE DISCREPANCY.

MR. EDITOR,—You ask why it is that there is such a discrepancy between the report of the last census returns and the statistics presented at last Assembly by Dr. Torrance. The one saying there are 755,199 Presbyterians, the other 525,236. I would not attempt to give any satisfactory explanation of this discrepancy, but believe that a fuller knowledge of the condition in which some of the people live and act would go far to answer the question you ask. The difference of these figures indicates that many refuse to come into the Church and join with her in her work, but when the census agent calls they do not desire to be classed with those who have no faith, and to the agent call themselves Presbyterian.

This state of things is not confined to our Dominion. Recently, something like this lapsed state of many calling themselves Presbyterian has been shown in London by an appeal to Presbyterians in an article in the *Modern Church*.

In the east end of London there is a Scotch colony. The census says there are there 7,066 born in Scotland (the most of these belong to the better class of artisans), but according to the statistics of the Presbyterian Churches in that district there are only 746 communicants and 1,315 Sunday-school scholars. This indicates that the Presbyterian Church there is not gathering in all who by their relation to Presbyterian Scotland should be in connection with that Church in England. Some for social reasons may have formed connection with other denominations, but this does not give a sufficient reason for the discrepancy. It is to be found in the fact that a large number have lapsed into indifference to Church ordinances, yet desire to have themselves reported in the national census as religious people. We are persuaded that the same class of people is among us. We have lapsed Presbyterians who disown the Church, yet wish to retain the name when they do not fear any responsibility to sustain the Church as they imagine they would were they to identify themselves with it.

I know some families who do not attend Gospel ordinances, yet claim to be Presbyterians. To the Church these form a very hopeless class, because they refuse to be taught and to accept of the benefits of Gospel privileges or to do any thing to sustain them, though they are partakers of the good social influences these ordinances have upon society. We know of no way by which the discrepancy referred to can be reduced but by the diligent use of Gospel means and a large outpouring of the Spirit that shall awaken the dead among our respectable citizens.

R. H.

PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE MISSION, JERUSALEM.

MR. EDITOR,—We came up here in obedience to the Divine call, knowing there was a great work to be done among the Spanish-speaking Jews of this city, trusting entirely that He who called us would supply our needs.

He is greatly blessing our work.

We have weekly mothers' meetings and classes for Jewish girls, when we give them material for themselves and their children, and while they work we teach them Gospel texts and hymns, and the missionary reads and explains God's word to them at the close.

We have fifty-one women and thirty girls on the books, the usual attendance being thirty women and fifteen girls.

The way the better class Jews, rabbis and others come frequently and remain for hours in earnest conversation on the Messianic Prophecies, etc., etc., is most encouraging; they not only come themselves but bring their sons and grandsons. Several desire baptism, and have asked for a regular service in Spanish and Hebrew on the Sabbath (Saturday), but the generality prefer coming in small groups, as they fear each other.

This necessarily takes much of the missionary's time and strength, and it is very desirable that he should be spared monetary anxieties, that he may give his undivided attention to his work among the Jews.

There are many other branches of the work we are longing to take up when we see our way to the means and the necessary help.

He also writes much for the religious periodicals of the world, to arouse the interest of Christian people in the Jewish race, to whom they owe not only their Bible, but their Saviour.

Will you help on this work of the Lord in His own loved city, by your prayers, by your means and by interesting others in your homes and neighbourhoods?

Dr. Miller, pastor of the first Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, U.S.A., one of our best friends, has been called to his rest. May God raise up many others to promote the work he loved so well.

One servant of the Lord claims the privilege of buying the site for a place of worship.

Another writes to say she is sending us a Communion Service and Baptismal Bowl of silver.

The Charlotte Randolph Society sent us last year a bundle of material for the sewing meetings.

Another lady supplied the means for giving a little fete to 250 poor Jews and Jewesses.

A local lady friend living at Bethany offers us freehold ground for a Convalescent Hospital.

A Christian lady is coming from Ireland as a voluntary helper.

We want native helpers also to help in other branches of the work; and we trust that ere long God will send us adequate support. Yours in the bonds of the Gospel,

AGNES BEN OLIEL.