

people ready to receive them, and anxious for the ordinances of God's house. Their children were thoroughly instructed in the Shorter Catechism, and families soon learned to express their Christian experiences, and voice their praises, through the inspiring, if not inspired, hymns of Isaac Watts, which were almost exclusively sung in the public Assembly and in the household for more than a generation. Of course, not all of the Loyalists were Christians, nor all of the Christians Presbyterians, and indifference and open irreligion were too common in these, as in all new settlements. But the type of Christianity was clear and earnest, and Presbyterianism was the chief form of its early development.

By force of circumstances, and chiefly because help could not be obtained from any part of Great Britain, Presbyterianism was cultivated on the peninsula for many years, mainly by ministers from the United States, who came in answer to earnest appeals for pastors for the feeble and scattered churches. These ministers brought with them the zeal, the ardor and the sanctified enthusiasm which had been developed in the powerful revivals inaugurated by Mr. Finney, and which had swept over the whole of central and western New York. As a consequence, a revival spirit took deep root in Canadian soil, and "protracted meetings" became part of the spiritual machinery of the churches. The surviving Presbyterian U. L. Loyalists, and their children, were, except, perhaps, in Hamilton and St. Catharines, the chief supporters of the "American ministers," and were baptized anew in the revivals which, between 1831 and 1838, reached, with saving power, almost every neighborhood. Until after the McKenzie rebellion, at least, the U. E. Loyalists nor their "descendants" can be said, in any way, to have retarded Christian or Presbyterian progress. And if, now, there be occasion to seek out the cause of any "spiritual deadness" which may appear in any part of the Niagara district, is it not possible that it may be found to have originated less in the lack of stimulus to activity on the part of such "descendants," or even in the influence of Universalism, which, though early planted, took root in but a small portion of the district, than in the divisions and controversies of the Church, through many years, and in the radical and sudden change of custom and policy when the progressive American ministers came to be superseded by staunch conservatives from Scotland and Ireland? It is an unfortunate historical fact that, at one time, five presbyteries were "doing business" upon the field which was so long cultivated by Messrs. Eastman and Williams almost alone, and that the special aim of each was its own partizan success, regardless, apparently, of the spiritual interests of the district. Missionaries roamed over the territory, not as pioneers, to plough up and cultivate new soil in unoccupied fields, but to secure, or prevent a rival from securing, fields already cultivated through years of patient toil, by the U. E. Loyalists and their pioneer and American ministers. Weak and feeble churches were divided into weaker and feebler fragments, and the sound of controversy and strife outvoted the penitent's prayer and the song of praise and thanksgiving. But, besides the spiritually deadening influence of such divisions and controversies, the ministers of four of these presbyteries had never had experience in revivals, and were prejudiced against them. This is not stated to their discredit, but as a fact bearing strictly upon the question under consideration. It is reported that, during a revival in the Presbyterian church at Hamilton, under the labors of Rev. Edwards Marsh, Rev. Mr. Proudfoot, then recently arrived as a missionary of the United Associate Synod of Scotland, was present, as a close observer, but taking no part, for three days. When he came to leave, he said to Mr. Marsh: "Fifty or sixty persons have asked the prayers of Christians during these meetings; it will require months for you to train them for admission to the Church." Mr. Marsh's reply was: "And the same day were added three thousand souls." Ministers of Mr. Proudfoot's views and education, and with settled views in favor of the exclusive use of the "inspired psalms," could hardly expect to sustain the spiritual interest of churches and neighborhoods which had been almost constantly blessed by powerful outpourings of the Holy Ghost, and where the people had been spiritually fed and "brought up" on hymns "of human composition." A reaction would be a natural historical sequence to such radical change of teaching and customs, and to such divisions and strife, not unlikely to be followed by lukewarmness, and, in a new generation, by abso-

lute indifference and "spiritual deadness," requiring the ground to be again "ploughed up, in which the seed may be sowed." A like radical change in the other direction might be expected to produce like serious results, so human is human nature everywhere, and so disinclined are most people to change long-established customs, or to yield long settled attachments and prejudices. It would be quite as unwise to attempt to force "revivals" in uncongenial soil, as to check or prevent them where they have taken root deep down in the hearts of the people, and have been continuously instrumental in promoting a healthy Christian growth. And it would be alike injudicious to force an exchange of Rouse for Watts as of Watts for Rouse. When you touch a Christian's household songs, the psalms or hymns taught him by his mother, and which have been part of his lifelong Sabbath and daily worship, you touch—himself.

No less an authority than the Presbytery of Kingston, fully forty years ago, expressed the opinion that "in case of congregations of long standing, and consisting of a considerable number of members, it might not be wise to propose sudden and great changes in constitutions already existing." The principle is as applicable to communities of churches as to individual congregations, to customs as to constitutions, to the Niagara district as to portions of Canada farther east, and to one generation as to another. It was a wise conclusion judiciously stated by a dignified representative body of the Church of Scotland in Canada.

#### COMMITTEEISM.

MR. EDITOR.—The manner in which the committees of the Church are made up is a subject that often engages the attention of the ministers and members of the Church. And since the last meeting of Assembly, it is a subject which has occasioned very earnest comment, at least among many who were members of that Assembly.

The arbitrariness which seems to govern the selection of these committees, appears to have been carried to greater length at that Assembly than is usual—a state of things which is not, however, an unmixed evil, as no doubt it will have a good effect in rousing the Church to seek some remedy for such a mode of procedure in connection with the committees.

And indeed, it seems strange, that while a means could be found of appointing such committees as are necessary, that would not be so arbitrary and unsatisfactory, and also a means of changing the names on the various committees so as to engage a larger number of ministers and elders in the work, that would not be so unreasonable and unjust as that now in use, that such means should not be sought and applied as speedily as possible.

The selection of the committees in last Assembly would probably afford more ground for complaint and criticism than that of some previous years, were there space here to review it. But without entering on so wide a field, there are one or two matters connected with it which may serve to illustrate the spirit of wisdom or unwisdom which governs the makers of committees. The nominating committee, for example, in selecting the committee on the distribution of Probationers, indulged their power in removing the name of a gentleman who had been on the committee for one year, and put on in his place, a gentleman already, and frequently, burdened with an ample share of Church work. And not only so, but in doing this, they left on the committee, five of whose members are ministers,—three ministers representing, if we may so speak, one branch of the Church, and that the smaller, and two ministers representing the other and larger. It may be hoped that this important change on that committee will go far to solve the difficulties connected with the distribution of the Probationers. But it is not very easy to see how, and in the circumstances it certainly would have seemed a more natural and reasonable procedure, had one of those who had been on the committee for some years been removed, and this objectionable party been allowed to remain a little longer where the Assembly had put him, especially as such a course would have given a more equitable representation of the two branches of the Church. Judging from the proceedings of the Assembly, however, this aspect of the question was not regarded. Committees were manifestly chosen entirely on the ground of the competency of the men, and if competent men are more numerous in one direction than in another, of course the committee

makers of the Assembly cannot help that. This, however, is doubtless, an unimportant matter, except to the individual so contemptuously treated; it is only mentioned as an illustration of what is constantly occurring, and of the extreme arbitrariness which governs this whole matter of appointing committees.

Another illustration is to be found in the case of the committee selected to provide a new hymn-book for us. One would have imagined, that here, if anywhere, a large and fair representation of the Church's mind would be found. It would have been advisable surely to have had on it, those who have been using the books from which the new one is to be compiled. But here, also, the same sublime arbitrariness has been displayed. It is difficult to believe that any principle, except in the vaguest sense, governed the selection of this committee; and surely it was a very uncalled for action, indeed a most gratuitous slight, to omit from the committee the name of Mr. Laing, whose motion on the subject was the one adopted by the Assembly. The case of the Home Mission Committee would afford illustration of the same absence of any apparent principle of a reasonable kind governing their selection. The nominating committees have evidently laboured too much over the question of maintaining the balance of power in the Church, and we need not wonder if this, which has always been a difficulty to statesmen, should have confused them. But whether these cases alluded to be important or not, whether the nominating committee have acted wisely or not, each may judge for himself; but it will certainly be cause of regret and of injury to the Church, if this matter of selecting the standing committees be left in its present unregulated state. And while brethren have long and tamely submitted to be shuffled about in the most inexplicable manner—now put on a committee, now put off without apparent cause—there is a limit to the submission due to such a mode of treatment. And it will be well for the Church, when brethren so oppose and resent such treatment, as to lead to modes of procedure that will utilize a larger proportion of the office-bearers of the Church, and give at least some ground for believing that men are not selected on mere personal or party grounds. I am, etc., PRESBYTER.

#### CHURCH EXTENSION IN MUSKOKA.

MR. EDITOR.—On Sabbath the 21st ult., the church recently erected on the townline of Chaffey and Perry in this district, was opened for divine worship by the Rev. A. Findlay. After the morning service the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was observed for the first time in this station. The history of this field indicates the rapid growth of many of our stations in this district. Two years ago it was reported that a few Presbyterian families had settled in this neighbourhood, then a dense forest. During the past summer and winter, service has been held regularly at this point by Mr. Andrew in connection with Huntsville—the result being that a congregation of between sixty and seventy with a membership of twenty meet regularly for worship. Many families are still coming in—a fair proportion of whom are Presbyterians—so that in a few years, when the difficulties incident to a new settlement are in a measure overcome, we may expect a strong congregation at this point. The new church is a substantial frame 26x38 feet, and is as yet in an unfinished state.

In December last Mr. Andrew—who has been most zealous in the work of church building in this field—secured from the congregation of Knox Church, Scarborough, the sum of fifty odd dollars to aid in the erection of this church. Encouraged by this timely assistance—under the personal direction of Mr. A., who can wield the broad-axe as well as secure subscriptions—the people set resolutely to work to secure for themselves a place of worship. Without this aid the church could not have been commenced. While these struggling settlers have the comfort of meeting in their own place of worship, the friends in Scarborough have the satisfaction of knowing that they have given joy to many hearts in this new settlement by their timely aid. In acknowledgment of the kindness thus shown them the Church is to be known as *Knox Church, Chaffey*.

Are there not some others of our comparatively wealthy congregations who are prepared to do likewise? There is room for the judicious expenditure of money in this field in church extension. At the present moment the want of a church is felt at Grass-