

The Duty of the Hour.

BLUE books placed on tables of Parliament, speeches by our statesmen of all parties, the unanimous voice of the press, and the experience of tens of thousands, tell the same story of the pressure of "hard times" and the necessity and duty of economy. Nations and individuals must pay their debts—must not spend beyond their means, except under heavy penalties. The Church has a very living interest in this subject of public and private finance—for it too often happens that when retrenchment becomes imperative it is first exercised on some one or other of our church enterprises! It begins with the House of God! The confession is a sad one, but it is well that the humiliating truth should be known and confessed. The Lord's portion will be lessened sooner than the portion assigned to luxury. This is not true of all: yet how few comparatively are those who are willing not merely to sing praises to Christ, but also to practise palpable self-denial for His sake!

We too would earnestly join in tendering and urging the good advice to practise economy. It is a Christian virtue, to "gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." God does not ask any one for what He has not first given. He does not ask what you cannot give. Your heart may be pained under a sense of your inability to give more liberally of your substance. It would be far more delightful for you to give twenty dollars than one dollar, and to give to all the schemes of the church than only to one or two. You are economising to the best of your ability, realizing that you are acting before God and men. You have retrenched your contributions to religious and benevolent objects only when you could not honestly do otherwise and when not even a "fragment" was wasted. Is it so? While some are doubtlessly acting in all good conscience in the matter, are there not many who wholly forget to consult conscience at all? Cannot most of us dis-

cover some one form of expenditure which we might reduce or wholly avoid for the sake of Christ and His church?

It becomes the members of the body of Christ to practise economy for Christ's sake. He having given up all for us, we should be willing to give up at least some of our luxuries for Him. Nay, we should be grateful for the opportunity of showing thus the strength and reality of our love and the fervour of our zeal. The Presbyterian Church of Canada has undertaken important enterprises at home and abroad in the name and for the sake of the Lord Jesus. We have Foreign Missionaries to maintain in China, India, the New Hebrides, and Trinidad. We have Missionaries in what we must now perhaps call a "home" field, among the Indians of our "Great West." These enterprises must not be allowed to fail or to suffer for lack of financial support. Reader: what have *you* done for one or all? Then, nearer home, we have our funds to assist weak congregations,—to carry the Gospel message to our scattered settlements,—to evangelize the French Roman Catholics,—to support our educational institutions. What have you done for these? The question is peculiarly appropriate at this time, for our ecclesiastical year is drawing to its close, and from published statements it is obvious that some schemes of the church are seriously hampered for lack of funds. We all know and feel that this is commercially and financially a "hard" year; and for this very reason it is doubly necessary for ALL to exercise the gift of a wise liberality combined with a prudent economy. The work of the church must be prosecuted without flagging, the church's honour must be upheld; there must be no retreat, or even halting, at a time such as this, but rather an advance all along the line. It is in years of depression that the Lord usually opens most copiously the fountains of His bounty. When His people strive bravely with adversity, He is ever most ready to pour out His blessing.