

But it is not the consecrated bread and wine only that He gives and we receive. They would profit us little, even if they were the very flesh and blood of Jesus, as the Romanists believe and the Lutherans, in some inexplicable sense, also affirm. He Himself, in foresight of that strange misconception, expressly declares, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." (John VI, 63). But, in the exercise of faith in Him as the Redeemer of our souls, who died for us on the cross, whose body was broken and His blood shed for us, we receive from Him, along with the material elements, the spiritual blessings of which they are the symbols and pledges, viz, pardon and salvation, and eternal life, with present peace, and joy, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus Himself serves His guests, and with no scruple hand. He satisfieth the longing soul, and the hungry soul He filleth with good. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures: (Psalm cvi, 9. xxxvi, 8). These are His promises, and they may, so to speak, hear His voice inviting, yea, urging them, like a generous host, eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved, for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. And so it is, and so are all these words fulfilled to the believing humble soul, that hungers and thirsts for His grace, for His love, and for His righteousness; and that, being in His presence and sitting at His table, pours out his heart before Him, with all its sins, and sorrows, and burdens, in penitence, in supplication, in intercession, and in thanksgiving.

Thus "not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith," are earnest-hearted communicants "made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."

In the second place, there is communion with one another, in the Supper, as of friends sitting together at a feast, communion, as sharing in a common faith, and love, and joy, and hope, and holy purpose.

There is communion also in a larger sense, even with the whole church of the redeemed, of every tribe and class, and name, on earth and in heaven, for all are members of one mystical body, of which Christ is the Head. Oh that this "Communion of Saints," in which the churches profess to believe, as it is a spiritual reality, were also a visible actuality; not necessarily in the incorporation of all Christian bodies on earth in one vast organization, but in mutual charity, and brotherliness, and all feasible co-operation! Thus would the world believe that Jesus Christ was indeed sent by the Father.

Obscurantism.

For the Review.

At a Protestant ministers' meeting in one of our large cities the other day, during the discussion of an aberrant theological system now making some noise in the world, one of those present excused himself for his ignorance on the subject by saying that he made it a matter of conscience never to read a book which was calculated to weaken his faith in God's word. He added that he was no coward, but he was thoroughly satisfied with Jesus Christ. He believed in the integrity of the Bible and considered it a waste of time to read what assailed these.

Now of course busy pastors cannot be expected to read all the new books and keep themselves thoroughly posted as to all the new movements in thought throughout the world. They must draw the line somewhere. But we would *firmly* hope there are few ministers in any Protestant Church that deliberately lay down any such rule as that indicated above, for it is nothing but obscurantism of the worst kind. Such a rule may be proper enough for children or weak minded people. It may be excusable in the case of a large number of laymen who never read theology of any kind, and know little about the subject. But for a teacher of others and a leader in religious thought to take such an attitude, is surely to make a confession of weakness and incompetency that any man ought to be ashamed of.

It would be folly, of course, for any minister to read only books that were anti-Christian or heretical. His spiritual life would be apt to run down on such unwholesome diet. But it is equally foolish to refuse to read

anything at all save what chimes with our own views, or with the views of our own church. Such a course will either beget a narrow-minded bigotry or produce a false security more dangerous to faith than almost any heretical reading that might be mentioned. The oak is prepared to resist the fierce tempest, by resisting the many lesser storms that test its foot hold on the mountain side. To shelter it from these artificially would be to ensure its ultimate overthrow.

In spite of anything that can be said such a course is cowardly, and the speaker betrayed his fear of the consequence to himself of such reading by the very language in which he sought to vindicate his practice. He would read nothing that was "calculated to weaken his faith." He was obviously afraid it might be weakened. It availed nothing after that to say that he was perfectly satisfied. It is possible to be satisfied on very insufficient grounds, and only by putting them to every reasonable test can we verify their soundness.

But further, a public teacher is bound to consider also the needs and difficulties of others under his care. Young men get hold of these erratic views by reading, and if they discover that their pastor knows nothing about them they are only confirmed in their feeling of conceited superiority to the old-fashioned kind of simple-minded Christians. It is not desirable that the preacher should frequently air his knowledge of these views in the pulpit. That is apt to make more doubters than it helps. But he must be in a position to deal with them when they come up in conversation, as they certainly will, if he be much among the men of his congregation. It is well to have strong faith. It is still better when the believer can give a good reason for the faith that is in him.

Home Mission Committee.

The semi-annual meeting of the Home Mission Committee opened in Toronto on Tuesday, March 22nd. Rev. Dr. Cochrane, convener, reported regarding the work done by the Executive since the last meeting, and the sending of missionaries to the Klondike. It was agreed that \$17,000 be given to the Synod of Manitoba next year for missionary purposes, and \$18,000 to the Synods of British Columbia for use during next year. An appropriation of \$10,000 was also made for the Klondike. An allowance of \$75,000 was made for Ontario and Quebec Synods for the next year, and, in addition to these, there will be about \$15,000 for travelling expenses for missionaries, which will place the total amount required to carry on the work next year at about \$85,000.

A deputation of Ladies from the Toronto churches waited upon the committee with reference to sending trained nurses to the Klondike. The committee expressed sympathy with the object and appointed a sub-committee to confer with the ladies.

At Wednesday's meeting of the Committee a resolution was passed that it is advisable to send a deputation to Great Britain to address the Synod and General Assemblies there, and to advocate the claims of the home mission work in Western Canada and the Klondike during the winter season. It was proposed that Rev. C. W. Gordon, Winnipeg, should undertake this work. Mr. Gordon asked for time to consider the matter. It was decided that all moneys in the shape of bequests should be kept apart as a separate fund until it reached the sum of \$30,000.

Revs. Dr. Warden, Dr. Robertson and Dr. Cochrane were appointed to look after the further supply of missionaries for the Klondike, and the appointments were made for the next six months for mission stations in the various Presbyteries in Canada.

In the afternoon the deputation of ladies met with the Committee and discussed the question of sending nurses to the Klondike. Rev. Dr. Cochrane outlined the work required to be done. A Committee was organized with Mrs. McLennan as President, Miss Inglis as Secretary, and Mrs. McCaughan as Treasurer. It was decided to send out at once to all Presbyterian churches in Canada, asking that a lady in each congregation be appointed to co-operate with the Toronto ladies in taking up subscriptions. The required sum was estimated at \$5,000, which it was considered would be sufficient to fit out two nurses and pay their travelling expenses and salaries for one year. They hope to raise the desired funds before the meeting of the Assembly in June.