

The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto, Dec. 24, 1896.

RETROSPECTIVE.

THE wane of the year is a time for looking back as well as forward. Beyond question the present and future hold out life's promise and life's hope, yet both present and future are rooted deeply in the past, and the past has its precious lessons to us all. How has the year about to be numbered with the past been spent by us? Have we faithfully striven to fulfil the resolutions of a year ago? Let us look back. This is a seasonable time for examination. It is not too late to retrieve many possible mistakes; it is not too late to add to our credit account for 1896:

No question is of greater importance in this connection than how our vows of self-consecration have been kept. Have we promised and forgotten? Nay, tried and failed? There is still time for repentance and trust for forgiveness and grace. The Christians work ought to begin at his own heart. How has our heart been towards God during 1896?

Next, how have we discharged our duties to our families? Have the fruits of grace shed their sunshine in the home, warming into a kindly glow the sympathies and affections of parents and children and sweetening the sacred relations of domestic life. If there be anything lacking, there is still time to resolve and to do. Leave it not until the New Year. Do you reply "what can be done in one short week?" Much. Family prayer, family worship, every day is within easy reach. Make a beginning to-day where these have fallen into disuse. Understand one another perfectly in the home; restore good feeling; let there be a devout humbling before God. These be great things that can be done this year.

We owe a duty to the Church and to the congregation with which we are connected. It is a timely question to ask with what loyalty and diligence we have discharged this duty. Congregational work offers a wide field. There are the various agencies, visiting, mission work, teaching, and so forth. Now every member and adherent ought to be a worker. It is a glorious privilege and just as certainly a glorious responsibility. There is no gainsaying this condition of Christian life. We *must serve* God in the vineyard. And the scope is limitless,—the diffusing of a spirit of kindly brotherhood, the bringing of a friend to hear the good news, the praying for souls. There need be no excuse nor pretence of a want of opportunity.

Then there is the great and necessary work of the Church at large. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been greatly privileged. She has carried on her work earnestly, diligently and wisely. She boasts not; but he who runs may read. And she has to be thankful that not for years has the spirit of enquiry as to the management of her affairs been more in evidence than during these past few months. That spirit is a

proof of the awakening interest in the work of the Church by the younger members who have not had experience of her system, and therefore naturally and commendably seeks for information respecting details. But great work needs great outlay, great outlay of brains, and of money. The systematic giver knows how and how much he has contributed since January last. Make up the leeway, there is still time. Carry no balance forward to burden the New Year's effort. Let there be liberal, very liberal offerings on the last Sabbath of 1896. No Christmas or New Year's gift will be better bestowed than the dollar to the Church next Lord's Day.

And there are the solemn duties of citizenship. The great affairs of state have engaged attention this year. Will the part we played bear examination? If so let our patriotism be strengthened; if not, now is the time for repentance and new resolve. But nothing that is of public import is too insignificant to be neglected and at this season municipal interests claim a place in our thoughts. As we would happily end the old and begin the new, let us stand true to conscience in the discharge of all our public duties.

CHURCH FINANCES.

We published last week a letter from a minister regarding the official statement issued of the amounts required this year for the Schemes of the Church.

We learn that the Agent of the Church before issuing his Annual Estimate Circular corresponds with the respective committees and colleges and that the figures given are those supplied by the authorities themselves. The sums specified for Montreal, Queen's and Manitoba Colleges may therefore be assumed to be correct.

The amount asked by Knox College this year is \$18,500. This is rather under than over the amount that will be required. The expenditure of the College last year was \$19,278. The appointment of the two new Professors by the General Assembly will add at least \$3,000 to this amount for the current year, making say \$22,278. Add to this the deficit of last May—\$6,576—and we have \$28,854 as the total amount required for the year. From this has to be deducted the interest received from investments. Supposing this to be the same as last year—\$8,466—then upwards of \$20,000 would be required from the congregations of the Church. Strict economy is, however, being exercised so that it is hoped that \$18,500 may suffice. The amount asked is by no means an exaggerated estimate. It is hoped that every congregation may help to make it up.

The sum asked for Home Missions—\$30,000—is far from being the exaggerated estimate our correspondent supposes it to be. He has left out of his calculation a very important factor. Over and above the grants per Sabbath to fields, there was expended last year upwards of \$16,000 in travelling expenses of missionaries, salaries of mission superintendents, expenses of committee, printing, interest, salary of agent etc., etc. He has entirely overlooked these \$16,000. Adding these to the grants per Sabbath, we have upwards of \$76,000. The lump sum granted Manitoba and British Columbia is this year nearly \$1,500 larger than last year; this sum will be still further increased because of the increase made by last Assembly to the salaries of missionaries in British Columbia; the number of ordained missionaries employed in the older Provinces is this year greater than ever and as many of them take the place of catechists etc., the expense on the Home Mission