

is a father of this Synod, not only in age, but in ripeness of wisdom and cautiousness in a large measure, and on that account his testimony is all the more valuable. From last accounts, it appears that the movement has not abated anything in real power. In hearing such news the Synod will rejoice and give thanks to God, who is the author of all blessings. God hath visited his people. The Communion seasons which our Cape Breton brethren have been favoured with of late, bring up vividly recollections of scenes which our fathers in the old land were privileged to see—scenes of the Kirk of Shotts, of Cambuslang, and of the times of McCheyne and Wm. C. Burns, times in which the presence of God was realised in a sense in which it is too seldom felt. There is but one drawback to the hearing and recording of such blessed news. It is that the movement should be confined to one district or region—that it has not spread over all the Church. Why should the dew fall there so abundantly as to saturate the place so thoroughly, while all around the atmosphere is comparatively dry and parched?

Such are some of the encouragements that are presented to us in connection with our church work. In the absence of any visible movement, with the exception just referred to, such a movement as the world cannot but see and take notice of, we would fain discern in the marks that have been enumerated some tokens of the divine presence in our midst—tokens which, to say the least of them, prevent us from abandoning the work in despair. They are meagre enough, but they are tokens; we cherish them as such, and thank God for them.

The Report, however, would be necessarily imperfect were it to stop at this point. Willingly would the darker shades be left out if truth permitted. What has been said is not at the best very bright; it is rather, to use symbolical language, neither light nor dark. It would not be for profit if the difficulties and discouragements which are known to exist were not delineated.

SCANDALS.

Your Committee need not dwell on the grosser and more sensual sins which are referred to in some of the reports, those which in church nomenclature rank as scandals. These are not very prominent among us. Where they are known to be practised, it is a very grievous thing doubtless, very much to be lamented; but these are not the greatest hindrances that lie in the way of the Gospel. They bulk largely in the eyes of the world. With many, they are the only sins worthy of being recorded at all; but those that have any knowledge of God's word, and of the human heart,

form a different estimate of their nature and aggravation.

DISCOURAGING FEATURES,

Dissatisfaction with the present state of things, is a feature that characterises all the returns that the Presbyteries reporting have sent in. In one case where a series of queries was issued, to which the sessions were required to furnish answers when the Presbytery met to confer on the reports, it was found that the experience in each Session, when brought face to face with the queries, was wonderfully similar. Each imagined beforehand that the experience of himself and of his session was singular in its nature. There was deep self-abasement, as well as an indescribable shrinking from the task of answering the questions. What was felt was put so graphically in a letter that the Convener received, that a sentence is here quoted: "We met after worship yesterday," says the pastor that writes, "and I read the the circular you sent me and the queries. We all hung our heads like guilty criminals, got frightened, and pretended we had no time to consider the matter, as I had to go to a distance, and so we agreed to defer the consideration of them till Wednesday evening." This is a pretty correct expression of what was felt by nearly all the sessions. Even in such experience as this, there is a measure of encouragement.

FORMALISM.

Now, as ever, *formalism* is an enemy to be battled with in the work in which we are engaged. It is very rampant these days. Religious exercises are engaged in and gone through, more from habit than because there is nourishment, in a spiritual sense, expected from or experienced in them. The preacher is liable to fall into habits of routine. In preparing and delivering his discourses, as well as in other departments of his work, it becomes a task which has to be gone through, rather than a work which, when engaged in, sets his own heart on fire, and awakens in his soul a desire to set other hearts on fire. Hearers go to the house of God on Sabbath as they go on other days to their employments, simply because they have been accustomed to do so. The externals are all there—propriety, seeming reverence, right words used, and the right attitude taken—but it is all acting, and not very artistic at that. There is very little real life, in many cases. there is no life at all.

WORLDLINESS.

Worldliness, either with or without *fashion*, is very dominant. In civic and rural circles alike, worldliness prevails; in the larger centres of population, where wealth grows rapidly, fashion follows hard