

# The Dominion Presbyterian

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## The New Creation.

We are ever seeking something new; in fashions that are superficial as in ways that are profound we pursue our search. To healthful childhood, the world is all new, in a certain sense the world has to be created afresh in the case of each new child. Youth is the time of aspiration, when we pass forward to conquer new worlds. This is good, for as Professor Blackie said, "Where aspiration is wanting the soul creeps, it cannot fly; it is curiously busy in counting and classifying the bars of its own confinement." But after many discoveries we hear the cry that "there is nothing new under the sun;" that even the world we live in is old and weary.

There is truth on both sides; the world is old, and yet it is new; new each new morning, new to each new life. It is not by any means a new truth that those who live for selfish pleasure, or seek "art for arts' sake" soon become cynical and complain that life is vain. To such the world is a rotating machine, producing constantly a similar combination of circumstances, and life a dreary round of similar sensations. It is only the faith in an ever-living God that keeps our life from becoming a weary, stale, unprofitable thing. That is the central truth from which all other truths radiate. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." From the heart of this comes the revelation of the Christian religion. In tenderest tones our Master says "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

This great word He speaks when their lives are touched by the most tragic change, the departure of their Lord, and when Judaism is about to be dethroned to make way for a broader faith. No wonder that in such times of shaking men began to long still more ardently for a new creation, and to sing in rapturous strains of new heavens and a new earth, which do not pass away.

In this connection we need to remember Paul's great statement that "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new." Thus the great truth, real in all ages, is brought to bear upon our individual life; we are

## THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

reminded that the world within gives tone and color to the outside world. We must love the new creation in us, it is not a thing of scenery, of golden streets and pearly gates; but of a divine life, a real communion with God. The richest poetry, the most glorious imagery, cannot express the wonder and beauty of God's new world; but we must gain the secret within ourselves: through the child-like heart and the child-like faith it comes.

Thus, if we know what it is to be in the circle of His love, in fellowship with His great company of witnesses, in sympathy with His redeeming work, we shall face with new hope the prosaic life of a new year, and learn to transmute dark failures of the past into new inspiration for the perpetual strife, as we hear the great promise from out the heavenly sphere, "Behold I make all things new."

### Presbytery Representation in Assembly.

Shall the representation be in the ratio of one in six or continue to be one in four? The debate upon this question was carried on two years ago, and an almost unanimous decision reached that there should be a reduction in representation. For some reason the Assembly declined to ratify the voice of the Presbyteries, but these bodies were in earnest, and have themselves taken the initiative to ask that the representation be reduced. Against such reduction it is argued that it will place the power in the hands of the few, that certain members will always be present at Assembly, either because they represent important interests in the Church, or because of the personal influence they are able to exert in their respective Presbyteries. The General Assembly will thus come to represent, not the interests of the Church at large, but the interests of a dominant party in it. Such an argument discredits the good judgment of the Presbytery. It is not likely that five men out of thirty, however strong their influence, will succeed in securing their election year after year. Nor is it likely that, should there be discovered a tendency to bureaucracy in any of the commissioners in one year, these will again be elected in the succeeding year. It is true that under present system certain names are always upon the commissioners' roll. There are two reasons for this—some of these men are permanent officers of the Assembly, and some represent important interests of the Church at large, such as its home and foreign missions, its colleges, etc. These should be, by virtue of their office, permanent members of Assembly and the presbyteries in which they reside should have their full quota of commissioners apart from these. Again, some men represent the Presbytery better than any others, and are naturally chosen year by year. The check to an

abuse of the system is not to send any member of Presbytery but to send say two-thirds of the number chosen by a system of rotation.

The arguments in favor of a reduction in representation are overwhelming. The present Assembly is unwieldy. Anything beyond a formal discussion of a question is impossible. There cannot be the free interchange of thought and opinion that a smaller Assembly would afford. The limited choice would lead to more careful choice and only the best men would go by election. Then, too, with the smaller representation is bound up the question of the payment of the travelling expenses of commissioners. At present it would be folly to undertake so heavy a burden as the payment of the expenses of one in four of the members of Presbyteries. If the representation were reduced such payment would be possible. And until the travelling expenses of commissioners are paid we cannot hope for a truly representative Assembly. The central Presbyteries will be represented fully, while outlying Presbyteries content themselves with one and a few proxims.

### The Week of Prayer.

The public meetings held under the auspices of the Evangelical Alliance during the first full week of the New Year, are often disappointingly small. A thousand and one things interfere with the attendance, not the least among them being the social duties of the season. We are not, however, to conclude that the energy spent upon the perfecting of all details for this week of special prayer is mis-applied. The influence of the call for special intercession reaches far beyond the public meeting. In thousands of homes there is a unity of spirit during these days when the prayers of Christendom are united upon one common object. The effect will surely be apparent during the year so happily begun. Little asperities will be soothed down, individual preferences will give place to the common desire, and united effort will become more feasible where there has been united prayer, even though it has risen from the privacy of the home instead of from the crowded assembly.

We print in this issue an article by one of our correspondents entitled "The Demon of Dumbness. It is 'a living document.'" As it grows out of personal experience within our Church, we trust that the facts upon which it is based are few, and that the mood which it represents is not a common one. We are glad to give it to our readers because there is an air of reality about it; and the reminder that gentle courtesy is one of the highest Christian virtues can never be out of place.