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Toronto, March, 29, 1894.

Church Service.

LAST week we published an article by Rev. P. McAdam Muir, B.D., of Edinburgh, on the Church Service Society and the Scottish Church Society which ought to prove of interest to our readers, as showing the drift of Scottish religious thought at the present time, and removing as it does what might have been a misapprehension on the part of many as to the distinctive aims of these important societies. That the movement for a brighter although, not a less devotional form of service has made itself felt may be gathered from the impression it has made on so doughty a champion of use and wont as the Belfast *Witness*, who discusses the efforts of the Scottish Church Service Society in the following trenchant style:—"Our Church service (though nowhere so cold and dead as it had become in Scotland) is cold and bald enough in many places. Nothing but the want of knowing any better would reconcile congregations to put up with it, even for one day. Singing there is which is not praise, praying which is not prayer, worship, so-called, which is not devotional, sacraments administered without the appropriate praises and prayers that should accompany; a general slovenliness and irreverence, not intended, of course, but all the same marring the whole service, obscuring the glory of Christ, and hindering the edification of His people. Is this picture exaggerated? Not in the least degree. Is it too much to say that amongst all the Church agencies and objects this improvement of Church worship is one of the very foremost in value? Would it be unreasonable to ask the Church Courts and Church leaders to take this great subject into their early and serious consideration? A committee on public worship should be appointed, and would, if organized, have plenty to do. We do not over here wish for anything Ritualistic or unscriptural. Moreover, we are in no danger from any such thing. But we are suffering from other and opposite evils. We want more glow of spiritual and devotional life in the service. We want a service in which the people join together and are worshippers, not mere listeners. We crave good singing joined in by all cordially, joyfully thankfully. We desire prayers carefully thought out by our ministers, not pious ramblings and misquotations of Scripture. We wish to have the sacraments observed with devout affections, and administered with every circumstance of impressiveness and reverence and edification. This is not an undue demand nor an unreasonable one. It is not an impracticable reform; it lies to every man's hand, and would grow easier every year. This improvement of the Church service is a people's question. Nobody

wishes to see collisions between innovating ministers and objecting people. The people as a whole are deeply interested. The religious life of the people and of their children is concerned. Ministers in many cases are compelled to move first. But it is not a minister's matter so much as a people's matter. Wherever the people get an experience of a warmer and brighter service they can never be reconciled again to dryness, coldness, and deadness. This fact settles the question. Spiritual life asks for a richer expression and expansion. The people at large need to have a larger share in Church worship. As education advances, the young people are prepared for a worship more reverent and seemly, more beautiful and impressive. If we do not provide such, they are strongly tempted to seek it elsewhere. With us they would get an earnest Gospel preached, while elsewhere the preaching is defective, if not injurious. Every nerve must be strained to keep our young people in their own Church.

A Few Reasons Why.

These are some of the advantages which would accrue from the Young People's Societies taking up the question of placing the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund on a sound, liberal basis:—

1. The first great gain would be that such work would be the means of furnishing a rallying point for the Societies. And it would be a great gain. It would imply co-operation of branches, with new impulses, new life, new vigour. It would bring the Societies together with a common purpose, a single object in view, a record to make in practical work, and as a correspondent, in another column, observes, that would quicken the life of the societies. It would bring about the consolidation of the societies. Up to the present there is a lack of coherence and organization. The forces would be turned to better account if there was a better organization with a feasible system of control. And there can be little doubt this would be brought about by the necessities of co-operation and systematic effort which a work such as the raising of the large fund would involve.

2. The societies would be brought into line and touch with *one* of the great and necessary schemes of the Church. It is admitted that there is too little knowledge, and because of the dearth of knowledge a lack of intelligent interest among the young, of the routine or business side of church affairs. Until members become managers or elders, they, as a rule, do not show much concern in the methods according to which church business is transacted, or much knowledge of the labor involved in the position of office-bearers. Much less do the young men. To work in accord with, or under the direction of a church committee, would give an insight into the workings of the church which would deepen interest in the high objects at which the church aims.

3. The advantages would not be one-sided. The good done to the recipients would be a matter of inestimable benefit. And coming from the hand of the hale and hearty young to the infirm and aged minister who has spent his strength in the service of the Master, it would be seasoned with the grace of great propriety and appropriateness. The connection would be a happy one. The feelings, the motives inspiring the effort would be of the highest character bringing in their train the double blessing, the sure portion of the cheerful, worshipful giver