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Ottawa, Wednesday, 13th Feb. 1900.

THE POWER OF SYNOD.

The meetings of the Synods will soon be upon us, and there will be the usual effort to give some interest to their seditors by preparing an interesting conference upon religious topics. It is an open secret that were it not for these conferences the attendance at the Synods would be even worse than it is. Yet these conferences have no immediate concern with the business of the Church. They are helpful, certainly, but do not advance the work of the Church.

A remit is now before the Presbyteries to increase the powers of the Synods, giving them jurisdiction over all matters of purely local interest, and making them the Court of final resort for such matters as do not concern any constitutional change. This remit has met with very general approval. Some Presbyteries have merely expressed approval or disapproval; and strictly this is all they are expected to do. Some have added to this an expression of opinion as to the wisdom or the unwisdom of the proposed scheme. These expressions of opinion will be of service, if there is immediate action upon the proposal. If this is possible we hope immediate action may be taken.

There are, however, other considerations involved, and these demand the most careful consideration. If the powers of Synod are increased, and this increased power is exercised to the full, it will result in an immediate relief of the congestion of business at the Assembly. A considerable portion of the time of the Assembly is sometimes given to matters of purely local business. This time could be much more effectively used in the consideration of the great issues of our Church life,—the problems of Missions, Home and Foreign,—the question of education, of evangelism, of Church polity that are calling for earnest consideration, but are perforce thrust aside, because matters of detail must be settled.

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The meetings of the General Assembly are a heavy drain upon some of the men who are annually elected to represent their brethren. It is true that some half-way measures have been adopted to lessen this burden, but it scarcely affects the burden appreciably. Were the power of the Synod increased, so that matters of local interest relating to the congregations and missions and Presbyteries concerned could be definitely settled, with no appeal to higher courts, would there be need for annual Assemblies? Why should not our General Assembly meet triennially, or even quadrennially, and transact the business relegated to it? Let it meet for three weeks, if need be, and in the interval let the necessary business be transacted by an Assembly Commission, of which the Moderator should be the Chairman, and the Conveners of the Assembly Committees should be the members.

But returning to the Synod. Why should the meetings of the Synod be held at the time of the whole year when many of the members find it impossible to be present. A large number of elders are farmers and it is of the first importance that we shall secure their presence. They cannot leave their homes in early May. It is one of the busiest times of the year for them. Why should we not hold the Synod meetings in October? The matters that demand attention in the spring could readily be adjusted. In Manitoba there is an admirable arrangement, which has worked without a jar for some years past. It would work equally well in Ontario and Quebec, the only Provinces that still cling to the May meetings of the Synod.

Another matter that calls for serious consideration in connection with the meetings of the Synod is the proper adjustment of travelling expenses. At present those who would be of the greatest service at the Synod, who could tell us at first hand of the progress of the work in the outlying sections, are unable to be present, because of the cost. The central field is kept before the public in the religious press but of the brother working heroically in the outlying fields we know next to nothing. It would do us good if we could hear from his own lips of the kind of work he is expected to do, and does, for those men are not given, as a class, to disappointing expectation. But this may well lie in abeyance till the greater question is settled. Many who have not the opportunity to ventilate their opinions in the Church Courts have definite judgments upon these matters. Let us have them through the columns of the press, so that the Church may know where all its members stand upon this question of increased power, and its cognate question.

At this distance we cannot form a just opinion of the action of Mrs. Nation and her followers, but one result of her crusade is seen in the Chicago drug store wreckers. The Christian Science women might consistently join forces with the Dowiettes in their operations.

THE EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN

The evangelistic services conducted by Rev. Mr. Meikle in the Dominion Methodist Church and Knox Church, during the past fortnight, closed with a large and impressive meeting in Knox Church on Friday evening. The meetings were not quite so large as those conducted by Rev. Dr. Chapman in the Dominion Church—the break of a week in the campaign no doubt affected the attendance to some extent, and, besides, the extremely cold weather which prevailed probably deterred many from turning out at night. The meetings, however, were well attended, and what was equally important, if not better, was the harmony and brotherly spirit which prevailed among the pastors and their people of the four denominations who took part in the evangelistic campaign, and the realised presence of the Holy Spirit in all the gatherings. The nine to ten o'clock morning prayer meetings in the Y. M. C. A. hall, and the afternoon services from four to five o'clock in the church, were deeply interesting as well as very solemn, and will no doubt continue to bear good fruit. So helpful was the morning prayer meeting at the Y. M. C. A. hall that it has been decided to continue that service.

Mr. Meikle is a powerful speaker and can sing the Gospel as well as preach it; and he preaches "the Old, Old Story of Jesus and His Love" with an intense earnestness which shows that the burden of souls weighs heavily on him. His pleadings to the unsaved to accept the gift of a free salvation and thus be reconciled to God were pathetically touching and moved many Christians of long years standing to tears. At the present moment the results cannot well be fully estimated, but many professed conversion and the fruits will be more apparent by and by. Professed Christians, too, have received a stirring up which they very much needed; and the ministers of the Gospel have had a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit which is already apparent in their ministrations.

At the Friday evening meeting Rev. Mr. McLeod, of Mackay Church, recalled the fact that he was present at the evangelistic services carried on by Mr. Meikle, in Sydney, C. B., some years ago. One result of that revival was that a number of young men who had intended entering professional life turned their attention to the Gospel ministry and are now doing effective work for Christ—some in Canada and some in the United States. Among the number were the speaker (Rev. Mr. McLeod) and Rev. W. J. McKenzie who volunteered for mission work in far off Corea and died there after a short time of service, beloved by the people who still revere his memory.

The union meetings have closed for the present, but as Mr. Meikle firmly believe, and as the pastors earnestly hope, the revival can still go on, until it becomes in reality the Twentieth Century revival. What shape evangelistic services may take, at the time of writing is not known, but if union meetings are not at present