

maintained in good condition, and satisfactorily developed, we cannot do the best service in the foreign field.

2. The intimate connection between conscientious effort to advance the cause of the Redeemer, and the promotion of our own spiritual well-being, is also coming powerfully home to the convictions of Christians. Our own salvation is concerned as surely as the salvation of the heathen. And, if our final salvation were not endangered by the neglect of duty, is it not a pity that we should miss the strength and joy which would arise from more complete consecration of life and substance to the cause of Christ?

But there is a special reason why the subject of Systematic Beneficence should, at the present time, be brought before the earnest attention of our church. Last year the revenue for both Home and Foreign Missions fell short of expenditure, and unless there shall be an increase of liberality, the sad necessity of curtailing our work stares us in the face. The Convener of the Home Mission Committee (West Sect.) tells that at next Assembly we shall report a deficit of nearly \$12,000, unless congregational liberality is greater, or—bitter alternative—our operations are lessened. Last year the Foreign Mission Fund was \$5,000 short of expenditure, and the estimates for the current year are \$79,000, or about \$29,000 in excess of the receipts for 1886-7.

Now the church will surely not allow our work, which has been largely blessed, to languish and shrink for want of financial support. The piety of the church, we may hope, will make this impossible. Our hearty interest in following up what we have been honoured to do will make this impossible. The tidings which reach us from every mission field will, rather, open our hearts to go beyond anything hitherto attempted, and to widen and extend the limits of our work for our Lord.

Nothing impossible or unreasonable is expected of the church. Should all our congregations and members, or a majority of them, or anything near a majority, do as well as some are doing, we shall have no need to name the word *retrenchment*. It cannot be unreasonable to ask the church, generally, to do as well, in proportion to means, as many of the brethren are actually doing. Those who give best will not allege

that they give too much: why then should not others seek to stand in rank with them, and attain to the same honour and the same blessing?

Many members of our own and other churches devote a tenth of their income to the cause of the gospel, and find great comfort in so doing. Some give more than the tenth. None of these will admit that they are impoverished by their liberality; and in many ways they are sensibly enriched. We do not here make any assertion respecting the permanent obligation of the rule touching the *tenth*; but it cannot be right that the Christian Church should in almost every branch of it, fall greatly below this standard—as is the case at present. A great point is gained when the matter of giving is subjected to conscience, and *system* is introduced into it. If this first step is taken, much more will follow. The *proportion* will be elevated, and love to Christ will exalt duty into privilege.

The undersigned has not yet had the advantage of consulting with the committee of which, with the Rev. W. Henry of Shubenacadie, he is joint-convener; but as it is important that the subject of Systematic Beneficence should be brought forward without further delay, he hopes that the members of the Committee will pardon him for putting forth this short statement in anticipation of what may be done by their authority.

WM. CAVEN.

Toronto.

Augmentation Fund.

LONG before these lines can be read every minister of the Church will have received a copy of the annual circular from the convener, Rev. D. J. Macdonnell. We hope that no time has been lost in making the contents known to congregations, and that on their part there will be a readiness to adopt such measures as shall be deemed best for securing the permanent efficiency of this very important fund. To show how the new plan has worked since October, 1883, Mr. Macdonnell makes the following extracts from the report of his committee to last General Assembly:—