

The Dominion Presbyterian

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The Dominion Presbyterian is seeking a reliable agent in every town and township in Canada. Persons having a little leisure will find it worth while to communicate with the Manager of The Dominion Presbyterian Subscription Department. Address: 232 St. James St., Montreal.

The Century Fund.

On more than one occasion The Dominion Presbyterian has referred to the Twentieth Century Fund, and expressed the opinion that, while little was known by the general public, the matter was by no means being neglected. The splendid report submitted to the General Assembly by Dr. Warden proved the correctness of this opinion. So evident was it that every detail of this scheme in its preliminary stage had been thought out, and shrewdly estimated, that the Assembly, ministers and staid elders together, adopted the principle of the scheme by a unanimous standing vote.

It remains now for each commissioner to charge himself with the working out of the plan that shall be submitted. He should make it his business to make every other minister and elder in his Presbytery as enthusiastic as he was when one called out in the Assembly, "Let us stand!" Every man who rose committed himself to the work of making this scheme a great success. If he do his duty it will surpass present expectation as much as the reception given to Dr. Warden's statement of it surpassed expectation.

Only let us keep in view the great purpose. It is not to collect money alone; it is to unite all sections of the Church by this one effort, and it is to offer opportunity to receive a great spiritual blessing, which the consecration of our means to God will certainly bring. These are high aims, worthy of us and of our Church. Only let them fill the mind to the exclusion of all selfish and sordid motives, and the opening of the century will be to us the beginning of a new era.

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Electing a Moderator.

The choice of a Moderator to preside over and to guide the deliberations of any of our Church courts, should be conducted with becoming dignity. Sectional rivalry, or the comparison of personal attainments or claims is out of place. The present system of electing the Moderator makes such a presentation of claims almost inevitable. If this were done before the respective Presbyteries only, it would be less objectionable, but it is derogatory to have such claims presented on the floor of the Supreme Court as its opening act after being constituted.

Enough of fault-finding, however. Would it not be better to elect the Moderator by silent ballot, previously distributed? When the attendance cards are sent out to each commissioner, let there be three, or more, blank ballots, marked A, B, C, etc., sent to each. Upon the one of these marked A, let each commissioner write the name of the man whom he would choose for Moderator. These ballots should be dropped into a ballot box immediately on the arrival of the commissioner at the meeting of Assembly. After a given hour on the afternoon of the day on which the Assembly meets the ballot box should be opened and the ballots counted by the clerks of Assembly, and the result announced to the Moderator, as soon as the court is assembled. Should any one name have a clear majority of the ballots presented, he should be declared elected and the Moderator shall name two to introduce him to the court. Should no one have been elected, the Moderator shall announce the fact, and ask the commissioners to cast another ballot, using form B, and so on till one is elected.

A still better method would be that now pursued by the Church of Scotland, where the ex-Moderators at present living in the country choose the man who shall succeed them in the Moderator's chair. We hope the present Assembly, which, by the way, will be known as "The Committee Assembly," may at least initiate a much-needed reform in this respect, and send this matter to a committee to consider and report.

Church Music.

We wonder how many of our readers know that Martin Luther, the "Great Reformer," was almost as great a power in the reform of church music as in the doctrines of the theology of his time.

Church music, prior to the Reformation, was of a nature suited for the mass of the Church, which had grown very long and very tiresome to the people. According to the doctrines of their Church they were prohibited from taking part in it.

In Italy, a spirit of dissatisfaction was taking hold of the people, but it was not strong enough to battle against the

tendencies of the time. It required a strong power to break the fetters and make music a part of the worship of the people. It needed just such a man as Luther to recognize the much-needed want of song as part of the congregational worship.

So he went to work in earnest for the reform in the year 1522. So earnestly did he work, and with such grand results, that his enemies declared he had "destroyed more souls by his hymns and tunes than by his writings and speeches." True, there were some hymns sung in Germany before the Reformation, but there is very little doubt that Martin Luther was the first to thoroughly establish congregational singing. No little labor was this, as the material was limited. But then, no labor was too great for the "monk that shook the world." So after much toil and labor by Luther the public, in the year 1524, received the first Protestant hymn book, under the title of "The Little Book of Sacred Songs." It was received with much enthusiasm. So popular with the people were these hymns, that other collections had to be issued to satisfy the demand.

Among Luther's compositions must be mentioned that celebrated national hymn "German Protestants," "Ein feste Burg," which English-speaking people know as "A Sure Stronghold Our God Is He." This hymn is believed to have been written by Luther on his way to the "Diet of Worms." He had been summoned there by the German Emperor, to say whether he would recant or not. His friends tried to persuade him not to go, reminding him of the fate of John Huss, who was burnt to death. Luther said: "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roof, I would go and not be afraid. If Huss was burnt to ashes, the truth was not burnt with him."

"Ein feste Burg," which has so aptly been termed the "Marsellaise of the Reformation," was only one of the many of his beautiful compositions. His hymns soon began to be sung everywhere; in the field, in the cottages, in the workshop, as well as in the churches. They had a marvellous effect on Christian worship in Germany, and in all Churches of all creeds and countries, which has steadily grown and improved.

Secularism is crowding men on every side, and enlisting brain, heart and energy in all the walks of life. Christians feel its pressure, and find it interfering with their spirituality and allowing them little or no time for religious worship and service. It prevents one from taking broad views of duty and responsibility. It confines him to the narrow limits of the present life, and oftentimes to its most limited aspects. Religion takes a broader sweep and covers all existences and spheres, and develops and widens human sympathies, aspirations and relations here and hereafter.