

could be, and down at the bottom of the high pew was thanking God, wondering what had happened.

"At the conclusion of the service I went away in haste, and on my way met one of the men, who said, 'Halloa, what's the matter with you; you have good news?' I did not speak; but hurried on to my rooms. There I sat down, 'lost in wonder, love and praise,' as the hymn says, at what the Lord had done for me."

He continued: "I went on rejoicing in my heart, with a sense of sins forgiven, and was so happy that I could not hide it. Men in college made remarks about my appearance, and asked whether I had received a legacy or what. 'Have you got the vacant scholarship?' said one; but I evaded all their questions.

"Why did you not tell them your experience?" I asked. "It would have increased your joy, and most likely have done them good too. Were you afraid they would laugh at you, or what?"

"No," he replied, "I did not think about that, I cannot tell what made me so reserved."

"Go on with your story," I said, "and tell me all."

He continued: "When the vacation began I went down, and on my arrival home my dear mother remarked: 'I am very pleased to see you looking so well; and so happy,' she added, significantly. But somehow, though I knew what she was referring to, and what joy it would have given her to hear the good news, I did not tell her why I was so happy.

"My father also asked me many pointed questions—whether we had had any special services or meetings during the past term, and so on. Still I was silent, and did not tell them about myself.

After the vacation I came back to college as happy as before; but all at once my joy went away, and I have been most miserable ever since. Last night, while you were speaking, I thought you could help me. I am——"

There he paused. I said, "Are you miserable now?"

"No," he replied; "strange to say, I feel happy again."

"I did not like to interrupt his story, but while he was speaking I could see his countenance brightening. 'Shall I tell you?' I said, 'why your joy went away, and why it has come back again? You lost your joy because you did not tell of it, and you have received it back because you have borne testimony. We are but broken cisterns at best, which cannot hold water, though we may do very well for channels to transmit it.'

"I am very much obliged to you," said the young man, "for the encouragement you give me, and thank you sincerely."

"I accept your thanks," I said, "and will ask you to show your gratitude in two ways. First, I should like you to write home to your parents at once, and tell them why you were so happy at Christmas; and secondly, I want you to tell some of your college friends what the Lord has done for you."

He promised me he would comply with these two requests. Some time after this he told me that the first he found comparatively easy, but the second cost him a great struggle. He said he went to several of the men, but had much difficulty in originating the subject.

At last he communicated his secret to one of his friends, who, to his astonishment, replied, "I take shame to myself that I have never spoken to you. I am a converted man too." They rejoiced together, and then went in company with each other to a third man whom they suspected, and found that he was a believer also. In this way they discovered several more who could sympathize with them. They all came to my service in the evening.

My friend of the morning looked up with a bright face, as if he would say, "See the six men I have brought with me." None of them were gloomy, or sad of countenance.

Afterwards I talked to these men, and impressed upon them the importance and advantage of testimony. I pointed out how much we lose if we do not testify, and what encouragement we have if we do.—*William Haslam, M.A.*

#### GREAT PRESBYTERIAN DIVINES ON DOCTRINAL TEXTS AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—The following were words from the admirable discourse of Dr. Marcus Dods at the recent Pan-Presbyterian Council, and are hereby commended to the careful consideration of the Session of Knox Church, Gal., and the Presbytery which has endorsed their action. The subject was, "To what extent is the Church responsible for modern superstition?"

"If Christianity," says Dr. Dods, "has been presented as a religion of obscurantism, the Church is responsible in so far as it has allowed faith in Christ to become identified in the popular mind with faith in a number of doctrines regarding Him, instead of contenting itself with what Christ Himself demands of His disciples, which is simply to follow Him. He does not ask them to accept certain propositions about Himself, but to take Him as the Master of their lives. We have no right to ask more or to bar up the door of His house. We ought to be satisfied with what He has said, 'He that is not against me is for me.' He who has really taken Him for his Master is a Christian."

To which M. de Pressense, the eminent French Presbyterian divine, thus adds, in an article on Presbyterianism, in the *Contemporary Review*:

"If we ask ourselves, What is the spirit that prevails more and more in this important section of the Church? we recognize that it is that of a wide-spread catholicity, thinking much more of that which unites Christians than that which divides them."

This was the prominent feature of Dr. Oswald Dykes' inaugural discourse. His grand unfolding of the Standard of the Reformation, on which is engraved the noble device, "Gospel Liberty," could hardly have been surpassed. He brought into full light that great emancipation of conscience from all human authority, brought about by the Reformation, in the name of Him who gives us pardon by reconciling us unto God, and re-opening to pardoned men the arms of the divine Father. We can hardly approve too much this way of understanding the enfranchisement accomplished by the Reformation, which is indeed inseparable from what may be called its essentially religious work.

History emphatically proves that the right of private judgment is the child of justification by faith. But this great principle was not grasped in its full sense,—the liberty of souls was again restricted by divers usurpations. Scholastic orthodoxy stepped between the soul and the only Master to whom it owed allegiance. From this sprang divisions, from this narrow-mindedness, which nothing can destroy, until we return to the only Authority which we ought to recognize—that of Christ, who gives us both the right and the duty of direct union with Himself. Such is the master thought of this inaugural discourse.

So speak some of the first Presbyterian theologians of the day. Let us not forget, too, the practical counsels of a large-minded and large-hearted Presbyterian layman—the late Dr. Holland, who wrote as follows some twenty years ago: "I learn and believe in the New Testament that He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. A man who does this belongs at least to the visible Church, and I do not recognize the right of a body of men calling themselves a Church to shut out from their communion any man or woman who belongs to the Church invisible, or any one whom the Master counts among His disciples.

"Why should you build a high rail around your Church, and insist that every man shall climb every rail, when the first is all that the Master asks him to climb? I recognize repentance and trust as the basis of a Christian character and life; and I regard character the one grand result at which the Founder of Christianity aimed. He desired to make good men out of bad men, and repentance and trust form the bases of that process. When you go beyond this with your dogmas and your creeds, you infringe on the liberty of those whom repentance and trust have made free."

It will be interesting to notice whether the Presbyterian Church in Canada is to be guided by the enlightened and catholic spirit of such words as these—so unanimous in their conclusions—or by a narrow dogmatic exclusiveness, which would soon make our Presbyterianism as sectarian as the close communion Baptists. PRESBYTERIAN.

#### THE NEW YEAR.

MR. EDITOR.—The expiration of the Old Year and the commencement of the New one are too often seasons of mere dissipation and festivity. But let us pause and dedicate a little time to serious meditation. It is wise to reflect on the past and to contemplate the future. Behind us we survey an unbroken chain of mercies extending from our birth to the present time, and before us a succession of blessings secured by the promise of God and stretching away into eternity.

A considerable portion of our life is now gone forever, a year has just elapsed, a year that was big with events. To thousands it was joyful or melancholy, fatal or glorious, as it rolled along, many pleasing prospects were blighted, and many towering hopes laid prostrate in the dust; many sinners were summoned away in their wickedness, and many saints admitted to everlasting life. We should sit in judgment on ourselves and try at the bar of conscience and of Scripture our thoughts, words, actions, pursuits and principles. A frequent anticipation of the Day of Judgment will divest that solemn period of its horrors.

During the course of the year just concluded our heavenly Father conferred on us innumerable favours, some of which were unobserved. Others were noticed but not acknowledged and but few have been properly improved. Some of the most valuable gave us pain and excited perhaps our dissatisfaction. Yet affliction is a treasure of inestimable worth. It is promised to the Christian as a blessing, not denounced against him as a curse. If it please God to afflict us, shall it displease us to be afflicted. Some He deprived of their property, others of their health, and some of friends whom they loved as their own souls. These losses are undoubtedly severe, but we must remember they were lent not given, and God when He lent reserved to Himself the power of resuming them again. Shall we then relinquish them in sullen silence or lowering discontent, but should we not as we return them acknowledge His goodness in allowing us to retain them so long, and to derive so many and such varied pleasures from them. But the religious wealth of the Christian is unimpaired, for salvation intended as a gift not as a loan. Christians can say, "Christ is my Redeemer, God is my Father, the Holy Ghost is my Comforter, the promises are my portion, heaven is my home, life and death are my privileges." And shall they complain and murmur over a few troubles and inconveniences, which are allotted them in the covenant of grace and given to them for their good.

Cold and insensible is the heart which can view this conduct of God without glowing with love and gratitude. Has He not watched us and kept us all our lives long? Has He not borne with us in our folly, perverseness and unthankfulness? Has He not supplied our wants in the most seasonable time and suitable manner? Has He not soothed our griefs and comforted us in trouble? and when His providence has obscured our worldly prospects, His grace has opened to us

the boundless prospect of glory in the skies. Moments journey fast, but mercies faster. Each instant brings with it a multitude of blessings.

The importance of time arises out of its connection with eternity. Time in itself is of little importance, but when considered as the foundation upon which our eternal happiness must be reared, it is of inestimable value. God whose bounty is in all other respects unlimited is very parsimonious of time. He deals it out by moments, withdrawing the first before He gives the second, and retaining the third in His own hands and so leaving it very uncertain whether He will give it or not. The year upon which we have just entered may be our last, that it may be so to millions is certain, that it may be so to us is not improbable. But why should Christians fear to die, death will only terminate their sorrows and imperfections, expand their opening graces to instant maturity, translate them to heaven, and place them before the throne of God.

The opening year addresses each of us in solemn, silent, but expressive language, "Prepare to meet thy God." Let sinners hear and tremble! The benefits that flow from the Atonement will endure forever, but it is only in this life that we can obtain a title to them. And while the wicked are multiplying their crimes, and the feeble-minded are halting between two opinions, life is contracting, time is flying, ordinances decreasing, death advancing, judgment approaching, and the power of sin growing stronger and stronger. M.

#### VAIN OBLATIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—Does it not strike you sometimes, in looking over the columns of contributions in your own and other papers, that the fashion of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel dies hard in spite of all our boasted progress in the art of thinking?

It certainly seems to me that hymns and organs (and I am in love with neither) are very small gnats; that even the deceased wife's sister is a gnat compared with the widely-extended practice of raising money for church purposes by all sorts of schemes. Yet a line of mild protest against this practice to a column of heated controversy about hymns and organs and "sisters" is about the proportion.

Passing now the consideration of the figure the Church cuts when posing as a "social club," surely it requires no argument to show that the raising of money by these dodges is at once injurious to the spiritual life of the Church and dishonouring to the Church's Head.

Are church members and officers supposed to pay any attention to the legislation of the General Assembly? That body, at its last meeting, passed a strong recommendation against this practice, yet in a recent issue of one of your Church contemporaries I find no less than nine notices of Presbyterian Church entertainments with "proceeds."

If an army in the field disregarded its general orders in that style, what chance would it have in the presence of the enemy?

Perhaps I am old-fashioned, but I could not help thinking when I read an article in the *Globe* lately, about the quarrels and failures of missionaries, that if the money which went into our Church treasury was cleaner, the record of our work would be cleaner also. N. T. C.

*Up-in-the-Woods, Dec. 1888.*

#### THE ASSEMBLY MINUTES.

MR. EDITOR,—I have been lately perusing the Minutes of the last Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and was much pleased with the same. They are very interesting and encouraging on the whole. There are two funny mistakes in the Address to the Queen. First, the address congratulates her Majesty on the completion of the fiftieth year of her reign instead of the fifty-first. Second, her Majesty's daughter Victoria is styled the "Dowager Empress," when in fact her mother-in-law, the Empress Augusta, is the Dowager Empress.

With regard to the financial statistics, it would be an improvement if the sources of the income were shown. A column should show the actual contributions from the people; and a second column, from other sources, for we know that large amounts are gathered in from bazaars, soirees, concerts, strawberry festivals, garden parties, etc., and it is hardly fair that those should be counted as congregational contributions, and credited to families and individuals.

CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN.

*December, 1888.*

#### IS THERE MISMANAGEMENT?

MR. EDITOR,—The elders and managers of the Presbyterian Church, Strathclair, Manitoba, have petitioned the Presbytery of Brandon in reference to Okanase Indian Mission—calling attention to the wasteful expenditure thereon, and advising that, in the interest of economy and efficiency, that mission be carried on under a white missionary, and in connection with several Home Mission stations.

Okanase embraces only some twenty-five families, of which number ten or more families are Pagans, and therefore practically outsiders. Yet the Church sees some \$1,800 thrown annually into that small concern, where, at the same time, the whole work of Sunday and week days might easily be conducted for one-third the amount.

Mismanagement, such as here referred to, tends to make Indian work a by-word. X.