

Besides these Dr. Davidson wrote numerous articles for reviews and religious periodicals. For many years he wrote the reviews of theological books for the *Athenæum*. His criticisms in that and other periodicals are marked by great acuteness and learning, are often very severe and are perhaps, unnecessarily biased by his own theological opinions. His chief works are the two Introductions to the New Testament; the one entitled *The Introduction to the New Testament*, in three volumes published in 1848-51; and the other *The Introduction to the New Testament* published in 1868. These Introductions proceed on very different lines, so much so that, if it were not for the unity of style, the sameness of many of the critical references, and the frequent common tone of argument one would think they were by different authors. The first proceeds on orthodox lines; the second almost embraces the reviews of the Tübingen school. The first defends the genuineness of all the books of the New Testament; the other only accepts some of the Pauline Epistles and the Apocalypse; and even the Apocalypse is rejected in the last edition. Both works are exceedingly valuable, full of learning and affording a storehouse from which the theological critics can draw abundantly. The first Introduction, although rejected by Dr. Davidson, is still a standard book on the New Testament.

At the close of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century there was a great school of biblical critics in England represented by Mill, Wotton, Bentley, Kennicott, Principal Campbell of Aberdeen and others, but this school gradually declined, and, towards the close of the last century, was almost entirely extinct. The study of Biblical Criticism was removed to Germany. Dr. Davidson was one of the earliest, if not the very earliest Biblical Critic who revived it in England. His works on Biblical Criticism and Hermeneutics, and his Introductions both to the Old and New Testament, so common in Germany, were for a long period, the only works on these subjects in England. Since that time there has been a complete revival of the study of Biblical science; when, formerly, there were very few who directed their attention to this subject, they can now be reckoned by scores. In our time there has arisen English Biblical Critics who in scholarship and attainment, rival those of the most distinguished German scholars. Of this distinguished company Dr. Davidson may be regarded as the pioneer.

Some of Dr. Davidson's friends and admirers thought that it was right and proper that his long-continued literary services to theology should be recognised by a government pension. Accordingly a memorial was drawn up and presented to Mr. Gladstone the Prime Minister. It was signed by several bishops, by the most distinguished theologians of England, of all shades of opinion, and belonging to all denominations. In consequence of this Dr. Davidson has, for several years, enjoyed a government pension. Considering the great labours of Dr. Davidson and his valuable addition to the science of Biblical Criticism such a pension was most deservedly bestowed.

Our Church Pension Funds.

BY J. S.

For the Review.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has five different Pension Funds for the benefit of its ministers and their families, viz., the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, in two sections, Western and Eastern; the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, likewise in two sections, and the Widows' and Orphans' Fund of the late Church of Scotland. This last is a survival from the ante-union period and is intended to be ultimately merged into that of the Western Section, when the claims of those who were connected with the fund at the time of union are extinguished.

The success with which these funds have been managed and the liberality with which they have been supported are indicated by the fact that between them they have now an endowed capital of \$504,763.

The combined revenue during the year 1896-97 was \$49,977, of which \$25,577 was derived from interests on investments, \$15,301 from congregational collections and \$9,098 from ministers' rates. The amount disbursed in annuities was altogether \$46,389, of which \$18,722 went to 97 aged or infirm ministers and \$27,667 to 159 widows or their minor children. The average amount to each was \$181.

The regulations under which these funds are administered naturally vary somewhat. But there is one feature which is common to all, viz., that unless a minister makes a personal contribution to the fund of a fixed amount each year neither he nor his family can derive benefit from it under any circumstances. His congregation may contribute regularly to a fund of each class, but whatever the amount of their contribution, unless the minister has regularly paid his rates he is debarred from any advantage either for himself in his old age or for his family after he is gone.

The object of this regulation is undoubtedly to induce every minister to connect himself with the funds and to maintain his connection by regular payments. And it ought to have this effect for as a mode of insurance it offers a large return for a comparatively small premium. For every minister who pays into the fund expects to have returned in case of need not only all that he has put into it, with interest and profits but also his share of the congregational collections and of the interest on capital. There is no insurance company in the world that can offer advantages at all corresponding to this.

Now I do not think that any of the pensioners on these funds receive too much. I could wish that the amounts available for distribution were much larger than they are. A minister who has spent his life in the service of the Church and of the community is entitled to some consideration in his old age, and a minister's family has a claim to be remembered in case of his death. But I cannot bring myself to believe that the above principle by which a certain class of the ministers of the Church receive all the benefit to the exclusion of others is either right or wise.

It is not right, because, whatever the regulations may be and however they may have been passed into law, there can be no doubt that the congregational contributions and the subscriptions for endowment are given in order that aged ministers and all ministers' widows who are likely to need aid of this sort should be provided for. If a needy case arises which is excluded from benefit under the regulations it is impossible to make a special appeal on behalf of it for the simple reason that these funds exist and are supposed to meet all such. It is sometimes a matter of the keenest pain and disappointment to congregations after they have been contributing for years to these funds to find that their minister or his widow, as the case may be, is still unprovided for. In spite of anything that can be said to them in the way of explanation they feel that they have been defrauded. Contributing ministers certainly have a right to some advantage on any reasonable principle, but that they should reap the whole benefit is simply intolerable. It is worthy of notice as proving the general impression, that out of 936 congregations in the Church 811 are reported as contributing to the A. & I. Funds and 698 to the W. & O. Funds. While out of 1032 ministers only 482, or less than 50 per cent. paid rates during 1896-7 to the one, and 468 to the other. The other 50 per cent. have no provision whatever made by the Church for them or their families.

If this is not right, neither is it wise. It may be said that if all were to be given a claim on these funds they would soon be swamped. And certainly that would be true if the funds are never to be any larger than they are. But the chances are that unless something can be done to quicken interest in these funds the annuities from some of them will have to be cut down in the near future anyway. The committees complain of the lack of interest in them on the part of congregations and especially of ministers. But what more can be expected when more than one half of the ministers in the Church know that, however well intended by congregations, neither they nor their families can ever receive the slightest advantage of any kind from them, but that on the contrary the very existence of these funds will dry up the liberality of the Church towards themselves if they should ever come to need it. Give them a guarantee of the share that should be rightfully theirs,—they do not ask for more—and their advocacy can be reasonably expected. Until then they will continue to be lukewarm as they have been in the past.