

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### MISSION WORK IN MANITOBA.

"Oh, Manitoba costs so much! Living is so expensive there, we can't send any more missionaries! Yes, the duty of the hour is retrenchment! Expenditure and income must be equalized! We'll not only not advance, but we'll cut down till we have gained our object!"

Mr. Editor, and fellow Christians, such expressions may seem very wise; they may have the ring of the stock exchange; they may gain reputation for the man who utters them, as a prudent counsellor, a far seeing administrator, and careful financier. We respect the men who speak thus, for no doubt they are honest, but we regard their sentiments as neither the utterances of prudence, nor of fore sight, not as sound policy at all, but as timid doubting; not only as unstatesman like, but as shewing want of confidence in the great King and Head of the Church. Admitted that caution and prudence have their place in Christian enterprise, does the present state of the Home Mission Fund, which doubters call a "crisis," give any cause whatever for alarm? Really, look at it. Should the existence of \$11,000 of debt, incurred for such good and important objects be a matter of grave consideration to 60,000 or 70,000 communicants? Should what if capitalized represents \$700 or \$800 a year be spoken of and dealt with so seriously? Let the amount by all means cleared off; let it be grappled with as we hear it is being done in the city of Montreal (and the letter of that earnest friend of missions, Rev. Mr. King to the contrary, Montreal is showing that eight or nine Presbyteries west of Toronto are not alone in supporting the missions of the Church), let the Church do her duty to her Lord and she will be blessed with plenty.

Christian reader—when the Church has matured her schemes and her General Assembly guided by the Holy Spirit has been led to a decision, then the Christian confidence and enthusiasm of ten men are worth all the business maxims of a hundred clever statisticians. The statistical is infinitely behind the enthusiastic mind for raising money. There is no danger of the fervency of intelligent Christian men exhausting itself in prayers and psalm singing, and not finding its way into action and work. Enlightened zeal will not stop till it transforms itself into money in the treasury. The writer would relate a little Presbytery "experience," for surely all believe that "the Presbytery" may have its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, as well as the individual.

Eight months ago the Presbytery of Manitoba said to itself: "What are we to do for this summer's immigration? Here is a mass of 7,000 or 8,000 people coming. Here is a new contract to be let on the C. P. Railway needing 1,000 to 1,500 men, here is this and that other requiring to be divided. Here are calls from a dozen different points to follow our own people all over the prairies." The matter looked serious. The Assembly's Home Mission Committee had passed its famous "25 per cent. reduction resolution." Prospects of more missionaries were very, very dark. There was great anxiety on the minds of the brethren. It is not an easy thing for the Presbytery of Manitoba to tell any of her dear people that they shall be entirely without the bread of life. Well, it was "on the mind" of the Presbytery. No doubt earnest prayers were offered up. There was pleading with God to raise up help. Perhaps the brethren had something of the spirit of Knox, or of good old Doctor Burns, when the great Reformer pleaded with God for Scotland, or our noble old Doctor prayed and laboured for the scattered settlers of Western Ontario. Whether the interests involved in the spiritual guardianship of the Canadian North-west in its infancy, with its great prairie sweeps, are as important as those of that marvellous little land of flood and fell for which Knox pleaded, or fertile Ontario, for which Dr. Burns prayed, no one can tell, but the brethren prayed at any rate. They urged, as was right, the authorized Committee with all fair arguments to appoint missionaries at their meeting in October. They looked with confidence for three at least. They thought the effort to be made by the people of Manitoba to increase their contributions would enable the Committee to send the *trio* desired. They confidently told the people they thought twenty-five to fifty per cent. increase ought to be made on the amounts of last year. (N.B.

It is a great mistake to suppose that any large number of the farmers of Manitoba are men of means. Probably not five per cent. of the Canadian settlers of Manitoba though they are improving in circumstances are yet out of debt, on account of their expensive journey to the North west, the high price of all imports, and the necessary expenditure of building a house, fencing, and providing agricultural implements and other farm requirements. The opinion is, however, hazarded, that though no doubt the farmers of Manitoba are not giving to the measure of their ability, that this year they are not surpassed in the rate of their contributions by men of the same class anywhere in the Dominion. The people, on being appealed to by the Presbytery as above stated, did not disappoint their expectations, and their contributions, compared with the former year, were on the whole thirty two per cent. in advance. In one case the subscription list of the previous year was trebled, in another case doubled, and in almost all cases increased. But alas! the Assembly's Home Mission Committee were not able to assist even with one man. The blow fell very heavily. What occurred? The Lord answered directly the prayers offered to Him, and to a certain measure the gap was filled.

1. Rev. Mr. Roddick, a minister from Nova Scotia, settled in the North west this spring, offered his services to the Presbytery. He was gladly accepted, he supplies four stations, the people will not be able to raise more than \$150 or \$200, but the Lord's work is being done for Him, we trust, successfully.

2. Rev. D. McRae, an earnest minister of our Church had it put into his heart to come out to Manitoba in search of health. Members of Presbytery thought the country would likely agree with him. Presbytery asked him to take charge of four townships with five preaching places, and several other localities lying to the west of the Pembina Mountains. Mr. McRae acquiesced; his health is largely restored, if the people can give him \$300 or \$400 we fear that will be the maximum. The Lord will provide.

3. A young man, Mr. C. N. Copeland, who came with the earnest spirit of his pastor, Rev. G. Bruce, of St. Catherines, and had approved himself in addresses in the Y.M.C.A. meetings in Winnipeg, and in supplying mission stations on two or three occasions in the neighbourhood of Winnipeg with acceptance, had the same thought put into his heart, as had come to a minister of the Presbytery, viz. of going west to the new settlements. He has gone under the Presbytery. He stands in the very vanguard of settlements at Fort Ellice, 250 miles west of Winnipeg; he has any number of stations to visit and tries to overtake six with some degree of regularity. The people will raise a small amount, probably not more than \$200, and this will be long in being paid. May God supply the faithful young man!

4. The French Evangelization Society have for a year or two past been thinking of gaining a foothold among the French of Manitoba. They determined this year to send out Rev. William Mullins, who will do some work for the Upper Canada Tract Society, will supply two stations, Headingly and Riviere Sale, besides visiting freely the parishes of St. Charles and St. Francois Xavier. Mr. Mullins is succeeding well. The Presbytery is very thankful that the French Canadian Missionary Society were inclined to send him.

5. Furthermore, Mr. J. Lawrence, who had been acting as a successful missionary in West Adelaide, near London, for some five years, came to this country to settle. An acceptable missionary, his services were soon called for in Grassmere and five associated stations. At its last meeting the Presbytery placed him in charge. He is to receive the \$350 which the people promise to give.

6. Since the failure to obtain a missionary for Beautiful Plains (one of the three asked from the Home Mission Committee), this, with its four or five stations, were visited by Rev. F. J. McLeod, a missionary of the Church, engaged in the good work of travelling through and comforting the Gaelic-speaking people as he went. Mr. McLeod was desired by the people to remain with them for the winter, and he was appointed so to do by the Presbytery. Should the amount contributed by the people (that is all he is to receive) meet bare expense of living and travelling, the people will do exceedingly well. These sheep in the wilderness will thus be looked after.

7. Intelligence has reached Winnipeg that several applications have been made for the place of second missionary on the Canada Pacific Railway. God be

praised that the place is to be filled! An earnest, courageous, loving Christian will do much good among the men, who are, many of them, brave and honest fellows. It is inspiring to see these men, perhaps rough in exterior, yet willing to support their own missionary.

8. Two districts yet remain calling loudly for supply. Upper Little Saskatchewan, and Nelsonville, having eight or ten stations between them, and being in different parts of the country. Presbytery is trying to supply Nelsonville, but the other district is being visited but occasionally.

Such is the record of the year 1879 as to the extension of the work in Manitoba. The story of Presbytery "lights and shadows" is ended.

Christian Reader, will you ponder the simple tale? It is not to be supposed that *even* the two more missionaries clamoured for, will fully meet our wants. Several of the older fields need to be divided. Further, it is too bad it makes one's Presbyterian face crimson with shame to think that good men and true are working zealously, in a country of exceptionally high prices, for such small amounts as \$200 and \$300 a year, when they could make twice as much by turning to anything else. It speaks volumes in favour of these men that they are willing to do as they are doing! But this cannot continue. It must be only temporary. The Lord, we believe, does not desire his work to be done in that way. He has sent the Presbytery deliverance in time of need. All His work is to be done "decently and in order." The word here, *cus. hemonos*, is no doubt a very wide one, and is translated "honestly" in Thessalonians. Can these men live on such amounts? The Lord would surely have his work done in harmony with the circumstances, standing and resources of the Church commanded to do his work.

And what are we to do for next year's immigration? It is likely to be larger than that of any year yet. He would be a brave man, who knows what he is talking about, who yet could say: "We are doing too much for Manitoba! The work costs too much there!" Christian brethren, shall we not sow, even though we do it with tears, and debt, and self-denial, when so bountiful a harvest stands awaiting us?

NORTHWEST.

### FASHIONABLE RELIGION.

MR. EDITOR,—It was gratifying to me, and no doubt it was so to most of your readers, to read in a late number of your paper—the leading Church organ in Ontario—an editorial on this question. The thorough ventilation of an evil, of whatever nature, will, as a rule, be found to be the surest way of eradicating, or at all events of diminishing it. There are those in the Church, and, I am free to admit, they are now the majority, who heartily endorse every word uttered not only in the quotation from the "Witness" of Halifax, but in the editorial which supports it. There are those also in the Church, and their number is by no means small, nor is their position or influence to be underrated or despised—who cannot agree in either the arguments used against this so-called "Fashionable Religion," or in your estimate of the motives which prompt those defections over which you do not mourn, but which, nevertheless, one by one diminish the Church's power financially and numerically, and are severely felt, though possibly not acknowledged by her, in her emulation with other Churches in the work that is to do.

You and the "Witness" tell us that the "respectability" is all we lose in these defections, and that the moral tone of those left behind is all the higher and better for their absence. There may be, and doubtless there are, instances where this is the case, but they are by no means the rule. How many there are within the circle of our own acquaintance who have left our communion, and sought and found in other denominations that absence of bigotry and sectional rancour so often found amongst Presbyterians, and yet how few of these dare we say are incapable of helping the Church, and are beneath our contempt? We are mortified or annoyed when we see one of our young men or some of our young women led away, at first occasionally and then altogether, to another Church, through social relationship, or a preference for a more cheerful and lively ceremonial. We are at first disposed to sneer at their mental weakness or their contemptible "airs," and then to dismiss them forever from our thoughts as beings of perverted tastes and imbecile minds. If we reflect, however—and none of us should be so *Presbyterian* as not to profit by reflect-