

## The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto March 4, 1897.

### THE FOREIGN MISSION FUND.

WE publish in this issue a circular letter, signed by the Convener and Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee, which deserves and no doubt will receive more attention than is generally given to circulars. We do not agree with those who say that circulars are useless, much less with those who relegate them to the waste basket. The Standing Committees of the General Assembly, are the Church's executive, administering the Church's work, and it is but natural that occasions should arise when these executive bodies may deem it necessary to communicate with the Church, which they represent and serve. That can only be done by circular. It is therefore as much the duty of every member of the Church to give attention to communications of this kind, as to any other correspondence the post may bring.

The statements in this circular are clear and unmistakable, and may be summed up in three or four propositions. 1. The indebtedness at this date is \$45,642. 2. The amount required for salaries of missionaries and other charges from this date to the end of the Church year is \$24,000, which added to the present indebtedness, make \$69,642 the total amount required before the 30th April. 3. The total receipts during March and April, last year, were about \$30,000. 4. Assuming that the same amount will be received in March and April of this year, the Fund will close this year and begin another with a debt of \$39,642.

This is the bald statement given to us by the Committee, which it was their duty to do. As to the cause of this state of affairs they say: "The Committee think it proper to state that this present emergency does not arise because of diminished contributions on the part of the Church, for these are fully equal to what they were at the corresponding period last year. The indebtedness arises partly because of diminution in the amount received from legacies and especially because of the expansion of the work within the past eighteen months. The Committee were most unwilling to decline offers of service from several men and women who felt called to the work. They were also unwilling not to avail themselves of openings in several of the fields for the expansion of the work. . . . Surely it is more creditable to the Church and more in accordance with the mind of the Master that we enter into the new doors that are being opened in the Providence of God, in connection with the fields in which our work is carried on." Nobody doubts the correctness of that statement. It is the duty of the Church and more to her credit to follow the leadings of Providence, and enter new doors as they open. The only limitation can be, the ability of the Church to provide the means, and none will assert that the Church has yet put forth her strength.

What then does the Committee propose? They borrow a leaf from the English Presbyterian Church, who last year, during a week of self-denial, successfully met a similar emergency. They ask that the week, beginning with the 14th and ending with the 21st March, be consecrated to this effort, Sessions and ministers are asked to appeal to their congregations, either by personal canvass, or by the distribution of special envelopes, which the Committee will furnish in any required quantities, and which may be laid upon the collection plate on the Lord's Day, the 21st March. Arrangements have been made by which all receipts will be acknowledged during the week following the 21st March, in both the *Toronto Globe* and *Mail and Empire*, that the whole Church who will be interested in this appeal may know the result from day to day, as they are received by the Treasurer, Rev. R. H. Warden, D. D. We trust the response will not be disappointing. It of course goes without saying, that success or failure lies with the ministry of the Church. Hearty co-operation on their part will remove the burden, indifference or hostility will mean defeat. There have been a succession of appeals for famine relief in both Armenia and India, but our Church is both wide and wealthy, and in this case her honor is at stake. Our missionaries have gone forth, in dependence upon the promise of support. These promises must be literally fulfilled. It would be an intollerable disgrace if it were found necessary to recall any of these faithful workers. That would be worse than a breach of contract with man, it would be an act of disloyalty to the Head of the Church, whose work it is, and whose blessing is bestowed or withheld according to our faithfulness.

Sessions are asked to make this appeal known to their Sabbath schools, Bible classes, and Christian Endeavor societies. The funds of the Church owe very much to the young people. Their enthusiasm is easily kindled. If the appeal reaches them, we confidently anticipate tangible results.

The Committee rightly asks that a spirit of prayerfulness should characterize this "self-denial" week. "Ask and receive that your joy may be full." Is it too much to expect that this effort will not only remove the burden, but be the occasion of enlarged faith and efficiency both at home and abroad?

### AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND

For several months a correspondence has been conducted in the columns of a contemporary, the *Northern Presbyterian*, in which the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund and its committee have been discussed at great length and from several points of view. The controversy furnishes an object lesson from which the church can draw but small satisfaction. It seems to us to have been characterized by one-sidedness, an ignorance of facts and what is more to be deplored than all a want of the proper spirit in which criticism ought to be offered concerning the great and sacred work of the church. Criticism and controversy have an important place in the councils of the church; an interchange of opinion is not only desirable, but necessary, and if given with pure motives and good judgment ought only be productive of good. But here wisdom and tact are particularly essential and with respect to the controversy referred to, the reader is not left in doubt as to the rashness, and the crudeness of the views advanced and of the utter injustice of many of the statements made or their obvious inferences.

We speak by the book in saying that than the Committee intrusted with the management of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, no body of men in the church to day are more worthy of the confidence of the church. Clerical and lay,