

and after consultation with the friends there, I came to the conclusion that since we had delayed so long to occupy Brandon we could not possibly lose by a short delay at the present time, and might gain much by it. The friends, however, appointed one of their number, Mr. J. Howard, to act as secretary for the Congregationalists of Brandon, to keep track of one another, to seek out others who may from time to time settle in the place, and to serve as a medium of communication with myself and the Home Society. They have also agreed to hold meetings among themselves from time to time, so that even now we have the rudiments of what I trust one day may be a strong aggressive Congregational church in this Western city.

I then returned to Portage la Prairie to begin permanent Christian work in the interests of the Canada Congregational Missionary Society, one of the Brandon friends saying to me as I left, "Go and begin work there, if there is work to be done, and we will, at any rate, have a Congregational Church nearer us than ever before." That we have a work to do here, I'm convinced, but we shall have to be contented with small things for a time, but the day of such things we do not despise.

We have rented the Council Chamber for Sunday services and commenced in dead earnest our work there on November 18. By the kindness of Doctor and Mrs. Franklin a room in Linsdowne College has been put at our disposal for week night prayer meeting, so that we have fairly launched out into the deep, and have let down our nets for a draught. There is missionary work to be done in the place, may the Master help us to do it.

We are a little company, but we have given our hearts and our hands to the work. That it will be hard and discouraging at times, we fully expect; but we are knit together by the bonds of Christian fellowship in the first place, and secondly by a conscientious love for our own denomination, so with the Divine Master's blessing and presence we go forward to the success He sees best to bestow.

A. W. GERRIE.

THE Rev. Mr. Jackson has been visiting several Canadian centres in order to interest the friends of missions in the World's Missionary Conference to be held in London next June. A meeting was held in Toronto last week, at which Rev. Dr. Kellogg presided. Revs. Dr. Castle, Professor MacLaren, Septimus Jones, Elmore Harris, A. F. McGregor, and Hon. John Macdonald and Mr. John L. Blaikie were present. Sub-committees were appointed to confer with the missionary boards of the different denominations in reference to the appointment of six delegates. A committee was also appointed to designate suitable persons to write papers on missionary topics, especially pertaining to this country, to be read before the Conference.

## PREACHING WITH AND WITHOUT MANUSCRIPT.

A recent article in *Macmillan's Magazine* expresses the opinion that written sermons are "gradually falling into something like disrepute, and extemporaneous discourses are all the rage." I am afraid that even the latter class of discourses cannot, without considerable exaggeration, be said to be "all the rage," except it be when some pulpit humourist like Sam Jones comes along, which is not very often. The undeniable fact is, that preaching, whether with or without use of the manuscript, is "gradually falling into something like disrepute." Why is this? There are many reasons for it, quite independently of the main question. Time was when people would go to church, and patiently hear long winded discourses from solemn-faced divines, who spoke with "holy tone." It was an affliction and a punishment, but they endured it for the good of their souls. They had much reverence, too, for the minister, and regarded him as a kind of super-human being, with whom contact of some sort was necessary in order to salvation. But all this is of the past. People know better now. They have lost faith in solemn looks, holy tones and wearisome platitudes; and they know that the preacher is only a man, like themselves; in some cases, alas! not much even of a man. The public are, no doubt, culpable for the want of interest in preaching, to a certain extent, and I do not wish to screen the guilty, any of them. But my present object is more especially to address my brethren in the ministry, and ask them if we are not largely responsible for that "something like disrepute," into which preaching has fallen? I have been out of harness for nearly two years, owing to the state of my health, and have come back to it with a firm persuasion that a thoroughly wide-awake minister need not and will not lack hearers. In reviewing my own work I see the two great defects—poverty of thought and want of fire. I can see many more, but these loom up as the two most prominent faults, and I think they are those of the ministry generally. A sermon, whether delivered from the MS., or extemporaneously, needs to be packed full of ideas. They are the fuel with which the preacher is to make the fire. "While I mused," says David, "the fire burned." The people must have something to think about, if they are to be made to feel. The preacher having got together a pile of good fuel, in the shape of soul-stirring ideas, must kindle a fire with them, by virtue of his own earnestness. Noise is not earnestness. Those words which which move all human souls most deeply, such as "mother," "home," and "heaven," are softly-spoken words. Lovers are in earnest, but do not vociferate. Noise is the crackle of a fire of thorns, earnestness the glow of a furnace. The furnace of true pulpit earnestness must be lighted in the study, and brought