

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

WHAT IS AIMED AT BY THE BOARD? The answer is, to give the pure Gospel to those of the French Canadian people of the Dominion who do not possess it, and thus to bring them to the knowledge of the Saviour and to secure the Christian education of their children. This is regarded as an aim both Christian and patriotic, and the agencies employed for its accomplishment are Colporteurs, Missionary Teachers, Evangelists, and Pastors who place Bibles and instructive literature in the hands of the people.

IN THIS SPECIFIC WORK CALLED FOR? The Annual General Assemblies since the union of the Churches in 1875 have answered this question in the affirmative by commending the Mission to the prayerful and liberal support of the Church.

As justifying this action it is to be remembered as an undeniable fact that the people whose spiritual emancipation is sought, hold and cherish many unscriptural and anti-scriptural beliefs which are persistently inculcated by their religious teachers. These errors and their propagators are decidedly aggressive, and if left alone and not counteracted by the truth of God will inevitably act injuriously upon our children, our educational progress and all our most sacred institutions. It is well known that many thousands in the Province of Quebec have long been kept in a state of illiteracy which hindered their advancement in secular pursuits and unfitted them for the proper exercise of their rights as free citizens. They now keenly feel this to be the case, and there is a wide-spread demand for better education. As the outcome of missionary effort, the diffusion of wholesome knowledge in various ways through the press and by conversations, lectures and addresses, and by letters from friends in the United States and elsewhere, and, above all, by the circulation of the Word of God among them during the last fifty years, a powerful movement has set in of the nature of revolution from the religious-political system to which most of them hitherto have yielded unquestioning submission. Even their representatives in the halls of legislation have, with this emphatic approval of their constituents, asserted independence of clerical domination in civil matters. The present moment in the history of the people is therefore most hopeful and critical, and furnishes opportunities of aiding them in the struggle for freedom such as never before occurred. The fact that they are more and more rapidly losing faith in their old creed and religious institutions is attended by serious danger, and lays special responsibilities upon those who have the truth. History conclusively proves that the transition is natural and easy from irrational superstitions and credulity to the most appalling scepticism. Is this to be the issue in Canada? This is certainly the problem with which we are now face to face.

If, therefore, we are to be patriotic, if we are to be loyal to our Saviour's command to declare His Gospel to every creature, if we are to love our neighbors as ourselves and to give practical proof of it, then it is plain that we should do all in our power to save this people and our country from the impending dire calamity of their lapsing into utter unbelief.

WHAT ARE THE HINDRANCES ENCOUNTERED? They are the indifference and superstition of the people; the lamentable servility of the secular press; the wealth and power of the Romish Church, which by the law of the Province collects tithes and levies taxes to any amount for ecclesiastical purposes; the abject fear inspired by belief in the divine right of priests to inflict the most awful spiritual penalties upon refractory persons by withholding from them the sacraments and rites of the Church without which they cannot be saved; and the local persecutions which converts invariably suffer, and which have compelled many thousands of them to leave the country. It is this depletion of the roll of converts that makes it extremely difficult to establish self-sustaining churches.

These are grave hindrances among the people themselves, but there are others hardly less discouraging and formidable among Protestants. Such as the growing conviction that errors in religious faith and practice are of little moment—that error is practically as good as another—that Romanism and Mohammedanism and Buddhism are good enough for those who conscientiously accept them, and that it is undesirable and a species of reprehensible proselytism to disturb any one's sincere belief, however unscriptural. The prevalence of these forms of broad and spurious toleration begets lethargy and even active opposition regarding our mission. Hence some ministers fail to bring its claims before their people and to give them an opportunity of sending assistance; Protestant merchants and employers of labor who desire to secure the favor and patronage of priests, nuns, and Romanists decline to employ our converts, and thus effectually aid the persecutions by which many of them are expatriated.

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS? They are such that neither figures nor sentences can record. Spiritual success is not to be reckoned by human arithmetic. God alone knows fully what has been accomplished. The names of the fifteen or twenty thousand converts who have been expatriated in ways already referred to, are not on our roll—nor can we tell how many have passed into the eternal rest that remaineth for the people of God. The uplifting and spiritual forces generated throughout the country are beyond our cognizance. We can neither tell how much they have had to do in bringing about what is already cause for abundant thanksgiving and rejoicing, nor how far-reaching their influence for good may be in the future. We are unable to tabulate the peace of heart, the comfort and light in seasons of darkness and sorrow, the courage and strength in moments of weakness and conflict imparted by the sympathetic and loving ministrations of our missionaries. We know not how many young hearts have through their services been touched by the love of Christ among the humble homes and primitive Sunday schools of rural and out-of-the-way districts. Our report is thus necessarily defective and even silent regarding what is of supreme value in the sight of God and His servants.

To meet, however, the desire of those who lay stress upon statistics, the following figures and facts are submitted:—During the whole or part of the year 28 Pastors and Ordained Missionaries, 17 Evangelists, Colporteurs and Students and 20 Teachers were employed.

There were occupied 37 mission fields and 93 mission stations, with a Sabbath attendance of 2,415. There are 923 families under our care, with 1,079 church members, and 990 pupils attending Sabbath schools and Bible Classes. There were 153 members added to the church during the year, and there were distributed 901 Bibles or New Testaments, and 21,976 tracts, etc. The amount contributed by converts for salaries and other expenses was \$5,917.70; amount paid as school fees \$1,602.30; making a total of \$7,520.00. There were 25 mission schools in active operation, some during the year and others for a shorter period, with an aggregate attendance of 809 pupils.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of these schools. Those at Pointe-aux-Trembles have already given a Christian education to about 5,000 pupils, a large proportion of whom became true converts and have exerted an immeasurable influence for good in various walks of life. Not a few have become missionaries, pastors and teachers, and others lawyers, doctors, artisans and agriculturists.

THE COLLEGES.

HALIFAX.

The Board of the Presbyterian College, Halifax, record their gratitude to God for His goodness to the institution under their care. Another year of prosperity has passed. May like goodness and mercy crown the years to come. The city water was extended to the site of the College last summer, and the Board gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to have the use of it in the building. At the cost of seven hundred and seventy dollars, the necessary plumbing and sewerage were effected in a most satisfactory manner. Other improvements brought the whole capital expenditure up to one thousand dollars. Two bequests of five hundred dollars each were received during the year,—the one from the late Dr. R. F. Burns, of memory dear to the college, and the other from the late Rev. Alexander Campbell, who, for years labored in the Synod. These bequests were made unconditionally; but the Board have under consideration a special object to which they may be applied, and on which a further report will be made at some future time. The Rev. Mr. Campbell left also certain forest lands in Nova Scotia that may hereafter grow into value, for the purpose of founding an Alexander Campbell Bursary for a Gaelic student—one bearing the name of Campbell preferred. The Board has had under consideration the feasibility of erecting a suitable building for the valuable library now stored in the class-rooms and other parts of the College. It is considered that such a building should be of fire proof material, and that it might contain accommodation for a gymnasium and additional lecture rooms which, on occasion, might be converted into a convocation hall. The desirability of such a building has been affirmed by the Board, and the General Assembly are hereby asked to allow the Board to present to the Synod of the Maritime Provinces a plan for securing the same, and authorize the Synod to order steps for its erection, should they consider it wise to do so. The library has grown during the year by the gift of the most valuable of the books of the late Mr. McCulloch, and of many of those of the late Mr. Burns, as well as by the purchase of many of the best current books in the different departments of theological inquiry. The finances of the institution are fairly satisfactory, inasmuch as the revenue was slightly in excess of the expenditure.