

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

THE EVANGELIZATION OF ONTARIO IN THIS GENERATION.

Mr. William Henderson, the founder of the Shantymen's Christian Association, has issued a leaflet which we take pleasure in giving below—

"The famous motto of the Laymen's Missionary Movement suggests the above as a suitable motto for another much needed 'Laymen's Movement,' at our own doors, and until Ontario is evangelized the larger ambition will hardly be realized.

But one urges, "Is not Ontario already evangelized?" In answer to this we would submit a few facts for the reader's enlightenment.

As editor for nine years of "The Faithful Witness," a weekly missionary paper, the writer considered he was well posted in the needs of the world in relation to missions, and it was a considerable surprise to him to be informed by the late Rev. S. Childerhouse that he could be given one mission field within two hundred miles of Toronto, where there were 5,000 men in the district, and no missionary was available. Under the circumstances he felt he could do no less than drop everything else and go to this field.

Having had his eyes thus opened, the writer decided to thoroughly investigate conditions relating to lumber and other camps, as far as he could, and was astonished to find that the more he investigated the greater the need was seen to be, and that camps within 12 to 15 miles of villages with too many churches in them, had not received a single visit from a missionary for years. For lack of time and funds the writer has not been able to personally visit all this great North Country of ours, but two years ago, at the Synod meeting, in Toronto, the Rev. Mr. Byrnes, of Cobalt, made the statement that north of the Canadian Pacific Railway line there were estimated to be 250,000 able-bodied men, or at least from three to four times as many as could be found in the city of Toronto.

From his own observation, the writer is prepared to state that there are quite as many men working in camps south of the Canadian Pacific Railway, as there are in the towns and villages worth of it, or in other words, some 250,000 must be working in camps in Northern Ontario.

Now if this estimate is correct, and in the past two years no one has disputed it, it means that there are at least 5,000 camps of various kinds, and no systematic effort is, to our knowledge, being made by our Church to evangelize them. If you attend the spring meeting of one of our northern Presbyteries, you will hear the report of work among lumber camps somewhat as follows—

Mr. A—reports visiting six camps in his district, and Messrs. B— and C—, two or three in theirs. These visits have been paid once in the year, and the men have given good attention, and shown their appreciation by a generous offering to the mission funds.

We would add here, that after the missionary left the men assured one another that it was really the collection that induced him to pay this yearly visit.

In a few isolated cases earnest, consecrated missionaries have taken upon themselves to have a regular service once a fortnight in some adjacent camp, and now and again a still more zealous man will be found who gives all his time to the camps in his district, but these are the very men who will endorse the fact that no systematic effort has been made by the Church to evangelize this great body of men right in our own Province. In company with two companions, the writer drove 770 miles this winter, and visited, in all, 41 camps. These camps had been going from June and July, but in not more than one or two had any Presbyterian missionary held a service, and no services had been held by Methodists or Baptists either, if time had permitted to visit more camps

we are satisfied the same conditions would have been found.

Surely the above facts are sufficient to show the need of adopting, some such motto as "The evangelization of Ontario in our generation."

Because the men in the camps belong to all churches, the writer is satisfied that an interdenominational work is the best, and therefore organized a Council of prominent men belonging to different churches, and used the title of The Shantymen's Christian Association, as being one that would appeal to the men.

He is desirous of placing two teams, each in charge of two suitable men, who understand the work in the districts he went through last winter. These men could visit every camp on an average of once a month, by holding services on week nights as well as Sundays, and a beginning would be made towards systematic evangelization of the lumber camps.

Space forbids more at present, but the writer is fully prepared to go more into this matter with anyone who cares to do so."

Among the members of the General Council will be found Mr. Jos. Oliver, ex-mayor, Toronto; Mr. F. C. Blair, and Mr. R. J. Farrell, Ottawa; Mr. Robert Booth, Pembroke; Mr. Hugh S. Brennan, Hamilton; and Judge Ardagh, Barrie.

Mr. Henderson outlines his plans for the future—

One of the first of our plans is the regular visitation of missionaries to every camp. By this we don't mean a yearly visit, but, if possible, a monthly one. When one realizes that after visiting forty-one camps we had only made a beginning towards visiting the hundreds of lumber camps in the Province, and that the multitudes of mining and railroad camps have not had a visit yet from us, one will see that merely a beginning has been made, and that it will take years before this part of our plan is fully carried out, unless the Christian conscience of the people is suddenly awakened.

In July, many of the large camps in the Webwood district will begin work again, and we are anxious to place a pair of workers with light wagon and team to take charge of the thirty or more camps that can be reached from that centre, so that once a month through that district the men may have a chance of hearing the Gospel.

Then in Parry Sound district there are going to be a number of new camps this season, and two other men with a team could provide a monthly service for them all, by constant driving and holding services nearly every night.

Then into the camps hitherto unreached by the writer he would like to go with the same outfit as during the past season, introducing the work to the men and preparing the way for future work.

This is a very modest programme, surely, but it would mean a monthly service for some 5,000 men, and that from 3,000 to 4,000 men a month, who would otherwise not be visited, would at least hear the Gospel once in the year.

The cost of such a programme would not be more than \$1,000 or \$5,000. If there is any cheaper investment or more desirable one in missionary lines we are not aware of it.

There are plenty of suitable men available for such a work as above outlined, and they are ready to go into it if they can only receive the modest amount necessary for the support of themselves and families.

The officers of the Association are. Mr. Wm. Henderson, Superintendent, Burks' Falls, Ont.; Mr. Thos. Yellowlees, 235 College street, Toronto, Secretary; Mr. John McClelland, 352 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Treasurer. We can very heartily commend Mr. Henderson for leadership in such a movement, and he has been singularly happy in his selection of secretary and treasurer. Mr. Yellowlees, especially, has long been favourably known in con-

nection with Sunday School work, and he brings to his new position qualities of head and heart sure to make him successful in it.

THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN.

Dr. McCrae, in First Church, London.

This is an age when many things are being shaken. Anything and everything is being questioned and criticised to-day. There is scarcely a fundamental truth in any branch of knowledge on which somebody is not trying to cast a doubt. We need not, then, be surprised if the Christian faith is being questioned and criticised. Nor need we have any fear that the religion of Jesus Christ is going to wax old and decay and pass away, because some changes are taking place in its outward forms, and in men's viewpoints in regard to it. Mere outward forms and human creeds, and theological expressions, may change. And some of them may pass away. But the essential truths of the Christian religion cannot be shaken, and can never pass away.

"Our little systems have their day; They have their day and cease to be They are but broken lights of Thee, And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

It has been said that incarnation, redemption and regeneration are not the mere catchwords of any age, or sect, or school of thought. They represent facts that are eternal, and that settle the destinies of all mankind. And modern criticism has not in the least shaken any of these facts. On the contrary, they are more firmly established to-day than ever before. The fundamental facts of Christianity have been on their trial ever since they were introduced into the world. But they have not been shaken. And they cannot be shaken. The fact of God cannot be shaken. The Bible does not argue for the existence of God, it takes it for granted. Every man has the witness in himself, in his own conscience, that God is. Men hold different scientific theories of the creation of the world, and by many other things. But these theories do not, in the slightest degree change the simple yet sublime statement, which stands at the very forefront of the Bible, "In the beginning God." No science, no learning can ever take us past that. The fact of Christ cannot be shaken. A former school of criticism sought to do away with the personality of Jesus, and to make Him a mere legendary symbol of goodness. No critic does that now. The later school of criticism has for ever established the historicity and reality of Jesus. And in His person he embodies the historic truths of the Gospel. The conclusive demonstration that He rose from the dead, is, that He lives and communes with men, and that He is at work in the world to-day. "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The fact of the Bible cannot be shaken. There are some who think that the Bible has been greatly weakened by modern criticism. This arises from the want of an intelligent knowledge of the facts. I know of no essential truth of the Christian religion that has been shaken by the established results of criticism. But I do know that destructive criticism has been utterly shaken during the past few years. Out of the fires the Bible is coming to-day, with much new light thrown on it, and stronger than ever, as God's full, final and complete revelation to the world. What the Bible claims for itself is that it is all "profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness." It stands at the cross-roads of human life and says to every bewildered pilgrim "This is the