

Canadian Presbyterian Magazine

Especially devoted to the interests of the United Presbyterian Church.

"SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD."—*Exodus* xiv, 15.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE	MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES—	PAGE
RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE—	Poetry—Little Things	41
Australia—U. P. Church.....	The Dispersion	44
Statistics of the U. P. Church. 31	The Poor Man's Evidences of	
Letter to the Presbyterian Ch.,	Christianity	45
Nova Scotia	Augmented Evidence for the	
EDITORIAL NOTICES—	Bible	46
Call	The Shorter Catechism	46
Attack and Defence	Why not Profited by the Word	46
Opening of the New U. P. Ch.,	The Bible	47
Paris	How amiable are thy Taber-	
Letter—Church Libraries	nacles	47
ORIGINAL ARTICLES—	A Call to Praying in the Wil-	
U. P. Church History	derness	47
Analysis of Paul's Epistle to	Purity of the Persian Sky	47
the Galatians	The American Union	48
Translation of Calvin's Com-	New General of the Jesuits	48
mentary on 1 Peter	War and the Gospel	48
Visit of Rev. Mr. Duff to Va-	Items, Receipts, &c.	48
cant Congregations		

Religious Intelligence.

AUSTRALIA—THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VICTORIA.

The Synod here is designated the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Victoria. It was instituted in January, 1850. It is composed at the present of twelve ordained ministers, but comprehends only eight congregations, most of which, as you may suppose, are but in an infant and unsettled state. The following is a list of the different congregations in the order of their formation:—

1. The church in Collin's Street, Melbourne, under the care of the Rev. A. M. Ramsay; commenced in January, 1847. Supposed population 70,000.

2. The church in Portland, under the care of the Rev. A. Ross. This congregation commenced in January, 1849, under the ministry of the Rev. T. E. Richardson, M.A. Portland is a seaport-town, near the Adelaide boundary, and about 300 miles from Melbourne. Supposed population 1500.

3. The church at Warrnambool, under the care of the Rev. Lachlan McGillivray. Mr. McGillivray has four stations, or hamlets, at which he officiates. He commenced his labours in June 1849. Warrnambool is a small township on the sea-coast, between Geelong and Portland, about 70 miles to the south-east of Portland, and about 150 from Geelong. Supposed population 1000 in the town and district.

4. The church in Lonedale Street, Melbourne, under the care of the Rev. William Jarrott. This Congregation was commenced in January 1850.

5. The church at Geelong, under the care of the Rev. Alex. Mc'Nicol. Mr. Mc'Nicol commenced his labours in Geelong in March 1851. Geelong is at the other extremity of the bay from Melbourne, and distant about forty miles. Supposed population in the town and suburbs, 20,000. Mr. Mc'Nicol's congregation have given orders for an iron place of worship.

6. The congregation at Broadmeadows, a township in an agricultural district, about twelve miles from Melbourne. The Rev. David Chapman, minister. The cause commenced in May 1851.

7. The congregation at Albury. The Rev. David Ballantyne, minister. Albury is situated on the river Murray, and is about half way between Melbourne and Sydney. Mr. Ballantyne commenced his labours in this township in June 1851.

8. The church in Napier Street, Collingwood, Melbourne. Rev. Robert Hamilton, minister. Mr. Hamilton commenced his labours in Collingwood in Feb. 1852.

The Rev. Robert Scott has been labouring for some time past in the

district of Kinnlochewe, about twenty miles from Melbourne. The district is partly a squatting and partly an agricultural one; but the population is extremely scattered, and there is little prospect of any congregation being formed. The Rev. C. S. Hank has lately gone on a visit to the Grange, in the Portland bay district, where he may possibly see it to be his duty to labour in the ministry of the Word, to the few settlers in the new township of Hamilton, and at the different squatting stations in the vicinity.

The ministers now mentioned are all that are actively engaged in the work of the ministry, at the present time, in connection with the Synod; and being so widely apart, they cannot often meet to deliberate on their common interests, and to devise those measures which the spiritual destitution of the country demands. There is little concerted action amongst us, and our combined influence is feeble. We do not speak comparatively. The evil we deplore attaches itself more or less to every evangelical community here, and arises out of the peculiar circumstances of the country.

It may be useful to you to know that there are three sections of the Presbyterian interest in this colony. There is first the section which sympathises with the Established Church of Scotland; second, the section designated the Free Church; and third, the United Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

1. The first section, designated Church of Scotland, is in the receipt of State pay, and up to the past year, numbered only four congregations, and in this state had continued to exist for ten years, viz., one in Melbourne, at present under the care of the Rev. Mr. Hetherington. One at Geelong, under the care of Mr. Love. One at Campbellfield, about ten miles from Melbourne, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Gunn; and two preaching stations, Colac and Wardieyallock, in the interior, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Gow. During the past year, three additional ministers have entered the field in this connection,—the Rev. John Reid, formerly of Johnson, who declines all State support in the matter of his stipend, and is forming a second congregation in Melbourne, the Rev. Mr. Low, who officiates at Forest Creek, and the Rev. Mr. Craig, who has recently gone to Belfast, a small seaport about fifty miles from Portland. We are not aware of any other congregations in this body.

2. The Free Church of Victoria, which commenced in November 1846, has five congregations. Two in Melbourne, the first under the care of the Rev. Mr. Sinclair. One at Geelong, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Tait. One at Boninyong, near the Ballarat diggings, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Hastie; and one at Kilmore, about forty miles from Melbourne, on the Sydney Road, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Hume. The Rev. Mr. Sinclair's congregation worships at present in the Protestant Hall; but a wooden place of worship has been ordered, we learn, from Singapore. The Wesleyans, we may here remark, have ordered several iron places of worship from England, which we hear may be shortly expected.

3. The United Presbyterian Church of Victoria, which commenced in January 1847, and numbers eight congregations, as already described at the commencement of this epistle.

Between the two last mentioned sections there exists no substantial difference, and a union, it is believed, is felt by severals in both churches to be exceedingly desirable, and a correspondence with that view is about to be opened. A letter has already issued from this Synod to the Synod of the Free Church, setting forth the desirableness and practicability of an incorporated union, to which a hearty response, we hope, will be given. It is considered, that the actual non-acceptance of State pay may furnish a sufficient bond of union so far as the question of civil establishments of religion is concerned, leaving the abstract principle to be entertained or not entertained by the office-bearers and members of our several churches, according to their own individual judgment. It is gratifying to have it to say, that, like our own congregations, the congregations of the Free Church have purchased their own sites, and erected their own manse without assistance from Government, and that they have joined in the late general protest against the "Public Promotion Bill," as it is called. This bill, we may here observe, has also been passed against the openly recorded opinion and solemn deprecation of Dr. Perry, Bishop of the Episcopal Church. In common with our brethren of the Free Church, the excellent Bishop opposes the measure on the ground of the support it gives to popery.—*U. P. Miss. Record.*