

—namely the Christian morality. This spirit of the times is a veritable heart-sore to the reverend pamphleteer referred to, who finds a logic of his own against every proposal favouring union. But the spirit of the times is a factor to be dealt with all the same, and certainly the Committee on Doctrine deserves the highest credit for meeting it half way in their deliberations, in order to make a missionary of it in the service of God and man.

WHO WILL BE FIRST?

By Rev. James Hastie.

I would like to reach the ear of the moneyed men and women of the Presbyterian church in this article, and direct their attention to the clamant need for new churches to be built in the new mission fields of the West.

Look at the situation in scores of places. For lack of church edifices, services are held in bachelors' shacks; in a family house; or in a school house, if such exists; or in the open.

These conditions are not favorable for regular and permanent work, all must admit.

Prayer meetings, Sabbath schools, special services, entertainments, etc., cannot be held to advantage, if held at all. Nor do the people get the idea of permanence and progress where there is no church building, while the feeling of reverence and sanctity is not fostered by the blank.

For these and other reasons church buildings are a pressing necessity in every new mission field. How is this sine qua non to be supplied? By the people themselves, of course, is the off-hand answer; who else should do it?

But, what of those scores of mission fields which cannot build churches forthwith, because of their paucity of numbers and also their poverty? Or, if they do build, they must be handicapped at the outset with a heavy church debt, and accruing interest.

What likelihood, then, that the missionary will get his salary in full, or the full amount from the people? Are such conditions fitted to attract the careless and godless to divine service; or induce non-descripts to connect themselves with the Presbyterian church?

What help is now furnished for church erection, does some one ask? And what more is needed? Through the efforts of the late Rev. Dr. Robertson, Superintendent of Missions, a church and manse building fund was created with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars—headquarters at Winnipeg. Help is given by this board for church and manse building in two ways, viz., by grants, and by loans. Where a grant is given the amount must not exceed one-fifth of the cost of the building, i.e., if the church is to cost one thousand dollars the maximum grant will not exceed two hundred dollars. Where a loan is made, the interest charged is five per cent.

Sometimes the board is unable to give a grant, when willing to do so, on account of lack of funds, loans being made only from the interest that is paid in from loans; the principal must never be used.

Exceedingly valuable service has been rendered by the church and manse B. B., but more is needed, and it is the purpose of this paper to point out how that "more" can be supplied.

After a grant of two hundred dollars has been received there is often a debt of from five to eight hundred dollars on the church with interest.

This in many cases is a heavy incubus upon a new and weak field, and the chief sufferer is usually the missionary whose salary is held back, or not paid in full. My present plea is that some of our wealthier people would devote one thousand dollars each (or two might unite to give five hundred a piece for the same building), to erect a church edifice in

some needy place, and this with what the people would be able to give would erect a suitable edifice free of debt.

To find out where such churches should be erected, the donors need only write to Rev. Dr. Herdman, of Calgary, or Rev. Dr. Carmichael, of Winnipeg, Home Mission Superintendents, and they will give information needed.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of prompt action in building churches in the West. The competition between the different denominations is intense. There is a rush for strategic points on the part of all. The body which shows the greatest energy and speed in providing church accommodation becomes the popular church, and thither the mass will resort. They want to belong to the winning side. Is it, then, too much to ask that ten wealthy Presbyterians in Ontario, say, give one thousand dollars each to erect ten new churches in the West this fall? Such seed-sowing would yield a hundred fold to the cause at least, and perhaps ten times that.

Who will be the first to respond?

JAMES HASTIE.

DID NOT WANT INDEMNITY.

A fine Christian feeling has been evinced by the widow of the late Rev. W. Labaree, an American missionary who was murdered in Urumia, Persia, and Mrs. Labaree sent in an earnest protest against the exaction by the United States Government of an indemnity of \$50,000 for the murder of her husband, Rev. W. Labaree, a missionary killed in Mount Ararat by religious fanatics. Mrs. Labaree made the following declaration: "I believe that the great mission to which my husband and I dedicated our lives, and which has become dearer to me because of the terrible sacrifice I have been called upon to make for it, may receive serious injury if my children and I accept the indemnity for the murder. The matter would not be understood by the great mass of the people in this district, who would inevitably know of it, and Persian ideas of blood money are so different from our civilized understanding of an indemnity. Thus serious and lasting injury might be done to the mission cause for which we have already sacrificed so much that I prefer to waive my right as an American citizen rather than to see the cause suffer. She further protested against the size of the indemnity, saying that while her husband's life could not be measured in value by the standards prevailing in that country, which fixed the life of a Christian at 33 tomans (dollars), and the maximum value of the life of a Moslem at 1,000 tomans, yet the disproportion between the sum demanded in this case with the sums paid in similar circumstances by other governments was too great. Mrs. Labaree asked that the strongest measures be taken by the United States government to see that if any indemnity in the end was exacted, it should not be extorted from the Persian government from the innocent people of province where the murder occurred.

In spite of her protest, \$30,000 was actually paid to her by Persia before the 30 days' period named in the ultimatum of the United States had expired. This sum was three times greater than the should not be extorted by the Persian government for the murder of a private person. Minister Pearson obtained a promise that the money should not be levied under any guise of special tax upon the inhabitants of the province.

During the twelve months ending with March the number of letters, post-cards, halfpenny packets, newspapers and parcels that passed through the post office was 4,686,200,000. This means an average of 108 postal deliveries to each person in the United Kingdom.

PRESBYTERIANS IN WESTERN CANADA.

Under the above heading a correspondent of the Belfast Witness writes from one of our new provinces as follows:

Of the different denominations represented in this part of North America the Presbyterian is strongest in numbers, and probably also in finance. Persons arriving from the North of Ireland will find the services somewhat different from what they are accustomed to at home. Coming to the church on Sabbath evening, we are met at the door by young men, who act very efficiently as ushers, finding seats for strangers, and for those members whose places have been filled up before their arrival. Tenant-right has no place in the building. Though sittings are allocated to families and individuals, there are no pew rents, and only by occupation can fixity of tenure be enjoyed. When comfortably seated we look around, and at once our attention is arrested by an organ in the choir loft behind the preacher's platform. The organist comes in a few minutes before the hour of service, and plays a voluntary until the members of the choir file in and take their seats.

We take up a book of praise, and on opening it we see that the larger portion of it is made up of hymns, just as we have in our books at home. In the part of the book devoted to the Psalms, instead of the complete metrical edition to which we have been accustomed, there are certain selections approved by the Assembly for use in the praise service. It is strange that Presbyterians, by such a process of exclusion, should appear to brand certain Psalms as unsuited for singing in the house of God. Before the service commences we notice that some taste is shown in the arrangement of a few fresh, bright flowers in vases on the reading desk. As the clergyman takes his place the choir rises and sings "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," after which the congregation, which is mostly composed of young men, bows in prayer, and the service goes on. Few Psalms are sung. Both the words and the music of the hymns appeal more to many of the congregation. With this preference for the hymns (and also with the disregard, in homes and in Sabbath-school, of the Shorter Catechism) we cannot help associating a want of strength of character observable in some of the younger Canadians. We think that if the Shorter Catechism and the Psalms were given their proper place it would help to improve the disposition of the rising generation. Before giving out his text the clergyman makes announcements of the several meetings to be held during the week, and in Canada, as at home, it is necessary to urge upon the people that they should attend the mid-week prayer-meeting.

The Ladies' Aid is an organization which meets periodically, and engages energetically in Church work. The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor holds out an invitation to its weekly meetings, at which strangers may get acquainted with members of the congregation. After the announcements comes the offering. Strangers generally give well to the open collection, while the regular members of the congregation generally give periodically in envelopes in fulfillment of promise to contribute a certain amount to the Church work.

Next there is an anthem rendered by the choir, or a solo or duet, which attracts many "casuals," but does not always conform with our idea of what is in keeping with the aim of the service. Then the minister proceeds with his sermon, and sometimes even in it we are surprised by expressions which we scarcely associate with the dignity of the pulpit; but there are able and earnest preachers, who give cultured and practical exhortations. After another hymn is sung the people remain standing for the benediction, then, as they sit down and bow their heads for a few moments before dispersing, the choir softly sings "Saviour, breathe an evening blessing."

12th June, 1906.