

VACANCIES IN WESTERN CANADA.

MR. EDITOR,—A few details about some of our vacant congregations may enable some enquiring about the West to come to a decision. The regulations of the Home Mission Committee are so well known that it is scarcely necessary to quote them. The salary of ministers of augmented congregations is \$900 with a manse or \$950 without. If ordained missionaries, \$850 with a limited amount for travelling expenses to the field. If catechists, \$7 per Sabbath with board and travelling expenses to the field. The supplement voted by the Home Mission Committee is guaranteed for one year, but the Committee does not guarantee the amount promised by the congregation any more than in Ontario—nor for fields in need of pastors.

MORRIS.—Forty miles south of Winnipeg on the C.P.R. and N. P. and M. R., a promising town surrounded by a good country; congregation spirited, and earnestly desiring to call a pastor.

MIAMI.—On the Brandon branch of the N. P. and M. R. Surrounded by one of the best farming districts in the province; three churches and a comfortable manse; over forty families; congregation ready to call the first good man.

BOISSEVAIN.—On the Pembina Mountain branch of the C.P.R. Good wheat section; sixty-three families; anxious to get a pastor at once.

RIVERSIDE.—Country congregation; north of Boissevain, fertile country; kind people; forty-seven families; prospects of increase; anxious to call.

ROSEDALE.—Country congregation; north of the line of M. & N. W. R. Famous wheat-growing district; congregation young and prospering.

BINSARTH.—On the M. & N. W. R. A good pastor would soon have here a self-sustaining congregation.

RALPHTON.—Country charge near line of Manitoba Central Railway. About seventy families; mission organized this year; people offer \$600 at least towards supporting pastor.

WAWANESA.—Station on the N. P. & M. R., at crossing of Souris River. Fine grain-raising section; over fifty families; promising charge.

ALEXANDER.—On main line of C. P. R., west of Brandon. Fertile country; sixty-one families; congregation anxious to secure pastor.

ALAMEDA and WINLAW.—Wide district in S. E. Assiniboia, with an important future. Near coal fields; over sixty families and nearly as many young men with homesteads. Shall this field go without a missionary this winter?

SASKATOON, ALVENA, DUCK LAKE, WILLOUGHBY, KIRKPATRICK, COLLESTON.—Stations and settlements mostly along the Regina and Prince Albert Railway. Shall they be neglected?

MAPLE CREEK and SWIFT CURRENT.—On the main line of the C. P. R., five hundred miles west of Winnipeg. No missionary in sight for them.

ELKHORN.—Two hundred miles west of Winnipeg on main line of the C. P. R. Promising field; good country; growing congregation; over fifty families; they deserve a pastor.

TREHERNE.—On Glenboro branch of the C.P.R. Fertile country; attractive field; over fifty families; anxious to call a pastor.

These are samples of congregations and missions requiring pastors; over thirty suitable men could be placed at once. If these missions are supplied the Church will have a goodly number of self-sustaining congregations in a few years, but if they are neglected irreparable loss will certainly be sustained. The attractions of Western Canada for young ministers are many. The country has an undoubted future, and it should be deemed a privilege on the part of young men to assist in shaping that future. The settlements are new, and the settlers being of good stock—moral and religious—will be easily moulded if Christian work is early begun and maintained. Instead of building on other men's foundations, young men would lay their own foundations and rear the superstructures. What could be more inspiring than to see a mission develop step by step into a vigorous, self-sustaining charge? A pastor in such a case would occupy a much preferable position to one ministering to a declining congregation in a decaying eastern village. And if the Christian ministry is to be cleared of the accusation of looking for comfortable churches, pleasant surroundings and good salaries, rather than spheres where they can quicken spiritual life and help to make social life clean and sweet, the western field must not be left unmanned. Sometimes missionaries are prevented from going west by the dread of a rigorous climate and by reports of inadequate and unpaid salaries. In December, January and February the climate is apt to be rigorous, but it is also vigorous, and in no province of the Dominion is the general health better than in the west. As for salaries, they are not luxurious, but yet they are sufficient to maintain men respectably. No other church at least pays higher salaries than the Presbyterian Church. There may be losses through short crops, as there used to be in Ontario in early years; it is seldom, however, that the efficient missionary is without the promise of the people being implemented, should there be instances of arrears, they are apt to become known whereas nothing is said when the salary has not been paid in full. The man who expects the frontier to furnish the comforts of the Ontario of to-day will certainly be disappointed; but the man of good sense who wants stimulating work and a wide field to call forth all that is highest and best in him, will bless God for the opportunity of labouring in Western Canada. This year's crop has given us new hope, and the increased rainfall this autumn has laid the foundation for a good crop next year. Good crops mean a larger immigration, denser settlements, growing villages and towns, and wider scope for Christian effort. The present needs and prospective growth emphasize our appeal.

J. ROBERTSON.

THE EVOLUTION IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

(Continued.)

But, admitting that every beginning of existence has a cause, can the application of this to the material universe be evaded by denying that it had any beginning. This has been attempted, and that from opposite quarters. To avoid all reference to God it has been contended that there is a permanent element in nature, which within the range of human knowledge has had no beginning, no cause, but is itself the cause or co-cause of everything which takes place. On the other hand, the world has been regarded as such a necessary revelation of the divine character, that the very idea of God is held to include all that of which a world of finite intelligence is the manifestation; this finite intelligence being in its very essence related to nature. In this case nature would be co-eternal with the Eternal. In both evasions, however, the eternity of any material element is an unproved assertion. Every part of nature which can be known is changeable, and thus has had a beginning. All with which experience brings us in contact is finite and dependent. So far as research can be pushed in the past, everything found in nature proclaims itself an effect of previous energy. Thus the matter contained in nature, so far as known to us, began to be. Attempts to reach its ultimate character have also to proceed by assuming a beginning. Science has sought to account for masses of matter by recognizing molecules, and to explain molecules by supposing atoms. This necessitates the further supposition that these have existed unchanged through all the changes of nature. Yet, as Professor Clerk-Maxwell expresses it, the exact correspondence of these to one another compels us to look beyond them to some common cause, or common origin, to explain why this singular relation of equality exists rather than any one of the infinite number of possible relations of inequality. If, on the other hand, an explanation of matter be sought by resolving it into visible modes of force, a conflict of energies, then these energies are outgoings, bespeaking the operation of a Being with all-pervading power. Nature reveals no ground whatever for denying to it a beginning. The deliverance of science may be summed up in the words of Sir J. W. Dawson. He says: "The geological history of the earth plainly intimates a beginning, by utterly negating the idea that 'all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world.' It traces back to their origin, not only the animals and plants which at present live, but also their predecessors, through successive dynasties emerging in long procession from the depths of a primitive antiquity. Not only so; it assigns to their relative ages all the rocks of the earth's crust, and all the plains and mountains built up of them. Thus as we go back in geological time, we leave behind us, one by one, all the things with which we are familiar, and the inevitable conclusion gains on us that we must be approaching a beginning, though this may be veiled from us in clouds and thick darkness." Since nature has a beginning, and since the demand for a cause is a valid one, the supernatural comes into manifestation in the beginning as a power adequate to the production of nature, and to all that has been revealed in its processes ever since. On the very threshold of created existence we hear a voice from the formless void proclaiming, God exists a God of power.

But while a condition without form and void might mark the initial stage of creation, it could be applicable to nothing beyond the initial stage. The very first activity in the created mass, the earliest approach to any arrangement, carries the creative work on a stage, and brings into manifestation a further development of supernatural agency. The Bible tells us that the first creative fiat was—Let there be light. Science confirms this by proving that light is the result of molecular action, dependent on fundamental qualities of matter as now constituted, so that its appearance must have marked the very initiation of activity in matter. "The latest readings of science," says Prof. Dana, "thus declare, as emphatically as the Bible, that on the first day light was." This was the beginning of changes, chemical and physical, which were to evolve systems of worlds, with suns and planets within them. It was the commencement of order in creation, the manifestation that its supernatural originator is not only a power, but an intelligence, shaping nature into an orderly system. The evidences of such order are now everywhere obtrusive. But even from the beginning of activity, from the nature of the case, creation has been an increasing development of definiteness of form, and uniformity of process. An outstanding example of this is seen in the exact properties of every elementary substance, and its strict invariable relation to other elementary substances. Endowed with these fixed properties and relations, a very limited number of elements is sufficient to furnish the material basis for the infinite complexity which nature presents. Moreover, as the creative mass separates into circles of worlds, these in their various movements and circuits work out the solution of rigid mathematical laws, to whose operations throughout all space they testify. Again, the typical forms, which even inorganic nature reveals, become yet more abundant when living organisms are reached. They reveal the operation of great creative ideas, in accord with which they group themselves into classes, or occupy their determinate places as elements in the single organic structure. If the demand for a cause is valid, then in the light of the order of nature, the demand needs for its satisfaction a cause which is not simply power, but intelligence. It is not too much to say that the possibility of physical science depends

on the intelligence of the author of nature. Every branch of physical science has made its advances by giving expression in thought to what had found expression in matter. The existence of any science is a proclamation that the subject matter with which it deals is expressible in thought. It can possess that character, only in virtue of being the embodiment of thought, and of a thought dwelling in its producer. The scientific investigator certainly does not contribute the thought which he finds in nature from his own mind, but just as certainly what he finds is the embodiment of nothing else than a mind. The attitude of the man of science towards nature is that of an observer not a creator. It is true that his own mind must supply the necessary principles under which he views the objects of his study. Kepler could never have discovered that the heavenly bodies move in elliptical orbits had the idea of an ellipse not been already in his mind. That the angles at which the leaves of plants grow as they diverge from the stem, thoroughly and accurately express the idea of extreme and mean ratio, could be discerned only by one, who understood what such ratio is. While this is true, it is equally true that unless the objects studied had really embodied these ideas, they would never have disclosed themselves to the searcher after truth. Nature shows in herself the objective reality of human thoughts, and so proclaims that she is the product of an intelligence whose thoughts we are thus permitted to read. It has been asserted that, since the human mind has those general principles and relations under which it views nature, it really constitutes nature, simply reflecting into matter its own intellectuality, and not necessarily presupposing any objective intelligence. This would be on a par with the assertion, that, since a person who observes the architectural principles developed in St. Paul's Cathedral, must bring to his observation a knowledge of these principles, therefore he is simply beholding his own thought mirrored in it, and has no need to suppose a Christopher Wren, in whose mind these principles first lived, and who planned and fashioned the stately structure, so that it should give expression to them. The attempt to evade an intelligent source of nature, by asserting that its orderliness and capacity of being apprehended in thought may be the result of chance or law, is either to offer an explanation which explains nothing, or to take the word chance or law, and clothe it with divine attributes. Thus from the dawn of light upon creation, and continuously ever since, we hear another voice from nature, with increasing plainness proclaiming: God exists, a God of intelligence.

The activity generated in the mass of creation was not merely for the sake of activity, however. It had a reference to, and was a preparation for the future. An eye-witness at any particular stage in the progress of creation might be able to see merely the fact of arrangement and order. But one who could extend his vision along the line of progress would discern in addition, that the earlier stages were being shaped in such a way as prepared for something further in the later. In this was manifested an increased development in supernatural agency. The Bible tells that after the appearance of dry land living organisms were brought forth by the Word of God, successively plants and animals. Science recognizes a real advance in the history of creation, with the beginning of life, while absolutely silent respecting the mystery of its origin. Facts from nature also sustain the sequence of plant and animal life, even though as yet no fossil plants have been found in the oldest rocks. Life when it appeared was a new thing in creation, and the fact that it was able to sustain itself sufficiently proves that the earlier stages, through which nature passed, fitted it for the sustenance of life. Geology can now describe with measurable certainty those age-long processes by which the various necessities of life were gradually brought about. Light, heat, moisture, the sediment of the rocks, entered into multitudes of correlations, such in character, that living organisms found a fitting abode. The appearance and the continuance of life shows that the previous ages of inorganic activity had not been purposeless, but were the development of a mighty plan, whose fulfilment is partly realized in the teeming life of ocean, earth and air. Moreover, a purpose working towards its fulfilment is seen also in the phenomena of life itself, and the higher the character of life, the more clearly it is discernible. A living being contains an apparatus of organs, sometimes very numerous, differing from one another, subserving various uses, but all co-operating in maintaining and reproducing the collective life of the organism. The fact that these organs are all unified in the production of one result declares that this result, future though its actual occurrence be, must have been ideally present conditioning their formation. A still wider view justifies a similar assertion with regard to the constitution of nature as a whole. The kingdom of inorganic nature and the two organic kingdoms are so adapted to one another, and possess such reciprocal action, that the continuance of the course of nature is secured. This steady pursuit of a purpose, whose fulfilment is in the future, demands a cause, equally with the existence and the order of nature. That cause can be nothing else than the thought of such result, pre-determining the series of co-ordinations and adjustments by which it is brought about. That thought must exist in the mind of the originator. Hence, in addition to power and intelligence, appears that wise forethought, by which the various means in nature have been designed for the ends realized; so that the present exists not for itself alone, but for the future. Should science at any future age succeed in establishing the theory that all natural existences have been developed out of one or more original germs, through a countless number of minute variations, according to certain general principles; this would not weaken in the least the demand for One who in wisdom had made them all. In that event both the product and the entire process of development would be manifestations of wisdom. The general principles operative in the evolution would need to be accounted for. The fact that these principles should so co-operate so as to produce a co-ordinated and adjusted result would also demand an explanation. The only adequate explanation would be that they had been designed for this purpose.