

AUGMENTATION IN THE WEST.

The Superintendent of missions, was asked by a representative of the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW:—

"Does the Augmentatian Fund assist you in Western Canada?"

"It has done much for us already, and, would have done more, if better supported."

"How many augmented congregations have you?"

"Twenty-six."

"Only 26! why I thought you would have 50 at least!"

"And so we should have, but were the Committee to place on the list the 25 or 30 missions that are now ready they would swamp the Fund."

"How many congregations with you have become self-sustaining through the Fund?"

"Over 50."

"And have any missions become self-sustaining without going on the Fund?"

"A few, Lethbridge, Austin, Nelson, Rossland, etc; but these are conspicuously the exceptions."

"Do you in the West favor the Fund?"

"Decidedly, it takes hold of missions at their most critical stage, and allows people, when asking a share in the management of their own affairs, to take that part that secures their interest and commands their support."

"Now tell me your *modus operandi* in connection with this whole work"—Mission and augmented congregation.

"With pleasure. In a new country like ours, settlement is constantly extending and new missions have to be started continually. Owing to a limited revenue, the difficulty of getting men, and the inability of the people to help much at the outset, we are forced to close many of the new missions in winter. When their contributing power is increased, they get supply the year round. When able to contribute \$400 a year or more, they get an ordained missionary, if one is to be had. In this way the mission becomes organized and consolidated; and, ere long, a congregational life is pulsating through it. The people are then anxious to have accorded to them the standing of a congregation, that they may enjoy the rights and privileges thereto pertaining. Deny this right, people are disappointed, interest languishes and progress is arrested. Gratify the just desires of the people, and likely in a short time the congregation becomes self-supporting."

"People are anxious then to call their own pastors?"

"Are you not? Do you not say that this is one of the things that differentiates the Presbyterian system? We have the same spirit in the West. People would rather belong to a self-governing colony than to a crown colony, and to a self-governing congregations than to a mission. Our experience is that a call and settlement gives the pastor a firmer seat in the saddle, and imparts greater confidence and courage in the management and guidance of congregational affairs. The people, too, are more ready to rally round the man of their choice than a missionary sent by a committee, to encourage him, to keep him and to accord him financial aid. The constant change incident to the mission stage, and especially the student stage, is bad for the missionary, bad for the work and bad for the Church."

"I agree with you. Now how do these congregations contribute for the support of their pastors? Do they not lean on the Fund?"

"No, they would not be allowed to do so; and they are too independent to attempt it. This Fund is not a "Hospital for Incurables," but a "Home" for young children, where they can be cared for till able to care for themselves. Proof: The General Assembly requires all augmented congregations to contribute at the rate of at least \$4.50 per communicant; the average in the West is \$9.00!"

"Why! that is a higher average than that of the self-sustaining congregations of the Church! Now, where are your augmented congregations found?"

"All over the country. Prince Albert and Edmonton, both on the North Saskatchewan River, were on this list, the one 500, the other 1000 miles from Winnipeg. Comox and Union, distant points in B.C., call the Fund a foster-mother; Portage la Prairie, Brandon,

Regina, Calgary, Kamloops and the rest all call this Fund blessed."

"I do not wonder at your being so enthusiastically in favor of the Fund."

"I believe that every true member of the Church would be, if he only knew a little more of its operations, and the service it is rendering to the Church and to true religion, East and West."

CHRISTIANS, BUT UNBELIEVERS.

There is a large element in the Church that is only in the vestibule. It has never come to the sanctuary or the most holy place where God makes service sweet, and where duty is changed to the beauty of a devoted life. There are many in the school of Christ who are in their primers, and do not or cannot value the academic stages. They are kindergartners, who have to be amused and entertained whether they learn much or little. Like some Chinese in our Sunday schools, their aim is to learn what will help them in business, while the teacher aims to administer some religion in homeopathic doses unbeknown to them.

"I do not believe in foreign missions" is one of the articles in the unbelieving Christian's creed. Perhaps the objection finds a point of attack from the fact that some missionary lives in a comfortable home, or his wife wore a silk dress, as if Christians who worked in one place should make all the sacrifices, and those who chose to remain at home should excuse themselves from sending the evangel. Perhaps they forget that if the Pauls and Columboes, the Patricks and Augustines, had not believed in missions to the bottom of their souls we might be painted pagans and naked barbarians to this hour. Perhaps they have not thought what they would say to Christ when he asks them if they did what they could to disciple all creatures.

"I do not believe in a Puritan Sunday," says another. Probably the Puritans made too much of the legal side of religion; but it is just as probable that the unbelievers make too little of the Fourth Commandment. Those who remember to keep the Lord's day holy do not spend half their time flinging stones at good people who had to make their faces like flint or be crushed in dungeons. There are too many Christians who believe in pleasure seeking on the holy day. They set out to travel when it is not a real necessity. They go driving or visiting; they do business or kill time; they read trash or secular papers. But they have no taste for the culture and sanctification of the soul. To hallow a whole day would be torture to them; to pray, study God's Word, teach, tell Bible stories at home, hear the Catechism, read to a blind woman, nurse a neglected invalid, help a discouraged neighbor back to God, and live for an entire day as Jesus would if he were in the same house, that seems preposterous.

"I do not believe in prayer meetings," says another. The avowal is made in action, not in words. There is a large section of communicants who seem to be habitually absent. If it is not from principle, why is it? What are the conscientious objections to attending on a week night evening the place where prayer is wont to be made? What is there that is immoral and unchristian in the frequent habit of good people who do unite in praise and prayer to Almighty God?

"I do not believe in Sunday evening service; not for myself, at least." The fellow is generous. He does not go so far as to charge a man with heresy who sustains his pastor by his presence and help on Sunday night. But he does what he can up almost to that point, to break down the Church appointments. He tries to freeze out the custom of church-going except on Sunday morning. He may be always present then, or he may go except when he is indisposed or wishes to do something for himself."

We do not know what to do with such church members. A rough-shod John the Baptist says he is going to draw up an "Apostle's Creed" for some of the baptized unbelievers to sign. Another calls them backsliders, and fears that there is no hope for many of them. But the difficulty with both of these doctors is in their prognosis. These unbelieving Christians, in many cases, never slid forward. They have never risen to that plane of Christianity. They are only in the vestibule, and they have no anxiety to go farther. Theirs are cases of arrested development. If pressed to go farther they may do so, or they may grow angry and shout: "Let us alone." God pity them. What can we do for them?—North and West.