

## Our Contributors.

### WHY SHOULD THE AUGMENTATION SCHEME FAIL?

BY KNOXONIAN.

Is this scheme of less importance than the other schemes of the Church? Not by any means. It is at least *one* of the most important, if not *the* most important. The pastoral relation lies at the very basis of our Church work. Anything that impairs the efficiency of the pastorate strikes at the very vitals of the Church. Anything that increases the efficiency of the pastorate gives efficiency and power to the whole ecclesiastical machinery. With pastoral work at its best, colleges and missions and every other branch of work are vigorously supported. Anybody that ever collected money for any Church purpose knows that, other things being equal, the money is easily obtained just in proportion to the strength of the pastoral tie and the efficiency with which pastoral work is being done.

This contributor does not hope to establish any claim to originality by saying that ministers are human. They would be very little use down here were they angelic. An angel would feel awfully out of place driving on a muddy road in an old sulky behind a lean horse between stations ten miles apart. An angel might not manage a congregation of certain kinds of people nearly as well as a man. He might hurry out the Lots and treat the remainder as Sodom and Gomorrah were treated. When they had tried that treatment for half-an-hour or so they might be sorry they did not support Augmentation and other good things. It is well for some people that ministers are human. Human ministers will cease before long in the case of each individual man, and some of those people who feel hurt because ministers are human may feel worse before they are many minutes under a ministry that is not human. Ministers are human, and, being human, it lays an awful strain on one to ask him to raise money for colleges, for missions and many other objects, when he knows that his own wife has to make a desperate fight against genteel poverty and that his own children are barely clad. One cannot help wondering if the conveners of standing committees ever think of the condition of some of the homes into which they send circulars asking for money. Why in the name of common sense are these missives always sent to the minister? Is he not frequently enough reminded of his biting poverty without being reminded of it officially? Why not send those circulars to the session clerk or representative elder? It may be true—it *is* true—that the more a congregation does for the general cause, the more it can do for itself. This is no doubt true; at least, true within certain limitations. But you cannot make many congregations believe it, and when they don't believe it the ministers usually suffer. As a mere matter of finance, it would pay every other scheme in the Church a hundred times over to make the pastoral relation more secure. A minister would have some heart to work for the schemes of a Church that treated him generously. A minister kept down to starvation point cannot do first-class work for his own congregation or for the Church as a whole.

Now we see some pharisaical skinkflint who always puts down his cent, roll up the whites of his eyes and say in snivelling tones: "Ministers should make sacrifices." We answer: Why don't *you* make sacrifices? Many ministers do make sacrifices. The whole life of some of them is one continued sacrifice. But why should the sacrifices all come upon one class? Nay, we go further, and, in supporting this Augmentation Scheme, ask why should all the sacrifices come upon certain members of this one class. We shall not do anything so silly or unfair as to say that all ministers make sacrifices. A minister who receives a salary of four or five thousand a year makes no sacrifice to preach the Gospel. He is better paid than the average man he preaches to. Very few lawyers or doctors make four or five thousand a year. There are ministers in receipt of good incomes who never could have made the same amount in law unless they displayed more brain power than they do in the pulpit. Let all this be assumed. Let it be assumed also that a minister who receives ten or twelve or fifteen hundred a year in any ordinary locality is not asked to make any sacrifices that a Christian man should not make cheerfully. Strike out all those who have

a fairly comfortable living. Now we come down to a number who have not a fairly comfortable living, who have hard work to keep the wolf from the door. Now, we ask, why should these few—alas, not so few—be compelled to make *all* the sacrifices? Not one layman in a thousand denies himself anything for the Church. The ministers with the large salaries don't suffer. At least we hope they don't. It comes to this in the end that the self-denial, self-sacrifice and all the horrors of genteel poverty are piled on those ministers who are called upon to serve poor or mean congregations. Is this fair? Is it generous? Is it Christian? Can a Church that permits her poorly-paid ministers to be ground in this way expect to prosper?

Just here is a good place to notice an objection that we have more than once heard. It is said that if a minister is an energetic, studious man, and works hard, he can soon rise to a higher position and secure a better salary. It might be answered that there should be no higher or lower positions in the Church of Christ. At any events the Church should never sanction any such distinction. Souls are just as valuable in Muskoka as in Toronto. Christ's work is just as important in Manitoba as in Montreal. As Phelps says, the first ten inches of growth in an oak measure as much as ten on the topmost branch. But we don't press this as an answer. It would be useless to do so. So far as aiming at promotion is concerned the Church is about as worldly as the world, and too many ministers may be relied on to scheme just as hard as the politicians they pray for. It may, however, be well to say that nine times out of ten the man who says "poor ministers should study and rise" would be the first to condemn them for candidating and the first to shout "money" if they moved to a place with a larger salary.

The correct answer to this objection is that the scheme is as much in the interests of the people as in the interest of the ministry. Supposing any given minister did get promoted the congregation would still remain. Another minister would have to come, and he too would have to live. The people gain quite as much by the success of the scheme as the minister. In fact, the smaller congregations depend for their very existence on this fund.

(As Professor Young used to say at the close of a paragraph—More anon.)

### SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

The Presbytery of Glengarry held its ninth Sabbath School Convention in St. Andrew's Church, Williams-town, on Tuesday and Wednesday, 19th and 20th January. It was a most gratifying success in every way. The meetings were held in the church, while meals for all were provided in the hall adjoining which, 'tis needless to say, were up to high-water mark of Highland generosity.

The two pastors, Rev. A. McGillivray and John Matheson, with their respective congregations, were indefatigable in their efforts to make delegates and visitors feel happy and at home, and they succeeded.

Two well-known Sabbath school workers from Montreal, the Rev. Jas. McCaul, of Stanley Street Church, and the Rev. Dr. Smythe, of St. Joseph Street Church, were present most of the time and contributed largely to the success of the Convention.

The first session opened at two o'clock p.m., Tuesday, and in the absence of the President, the Rev. A. Matheson, of Lunenburg, Dr. Alguire, of Cornwall, ex-President, took the chair. Addresses of welcome were given by Rev. A. McGillivray and Mr. Gio, elder, and replied to by Rev. James Hastie and Mr. McGinnis.

The office-bearers for the ensuing year are: Rev. J. S. Burnet, President; Mr. Alex. McGinnis, first Vice-President; Mr. W. J. Scott, second Vice-President; Rev. A. McGillivray, Secretary; Mr. Hugh McLean (re-elected), Treasurer.

The Convention decided to raise from the Sabbath schools during the year a sum sufficient to support a native preacher in Formosa. The treasurer reported that the \$100 which had been voted to repair the Glengarry Chapel in Formosa had been paid in.

The first topic taken up was "Individual Dealing," by the Rev. Dr. Smythe, of Montreal. After mentioning several examples from Scripture he proceeded to show us how to qualify ourselves for that work. The qualifications he summed up in these three: knowledge, love, judgment or tact. The mind must be well stored with Bible knowledge. Then love for souls is

needed as a motive power. And good judgment or tact as a guiding motive. These points he illustrated with much aptness and force. He was followed by a discussion in which several took part.

The next topic was discussed by Dr. Alguire, of Cornwall, "How to meet Discouragements in Sabbath School Work." He showed that discouragements are found in connection with every work of any importance. And that a discouraged teacher is necessarily a weakened teacher. He enumerated and illustrated (1) Inattention in the class; (2) Irregular attendance; (3) Stupid scholars; (4) No apparent results; (5) Discouragements arising from within the teacher's own mind. And then he named over against all these some of the encouragements. Several members then took up the subject and gave their views.

The next on the programme was "Sabbath Schools in Scotland," by Rev. A. McGillivray, who had returned a few weeks before from a twelve months' visit to Scotland. He showed the mighty Presbyterian power that existed in that little land. In the Church of Scotland, 500,000 communicants, 250,000 in the Sabbath school; in the Free Church, 340,000 members, 208,000 in Sabbath school; in the United Presbyterian Church, 178,000 members, 98,000 in Sabbath school; making a total of 1,100,000 members, and 640,000 in Sabbath school; or nearly ten times as many communicants and six times as many Sabbath school scholars as there are in our Canadian Church. In comparing Sabbath school work in Scotland and in Canada he was greatly disappointed with a good deal that he found in the Mother Country. He instanced: (1) The most unsuitable hour universally adopted for Sabbath schools, viz., five p.m., which there was the beginning of darkness, consequently there was a gloomy and repulsive feeling cast over the schools; (2) Arrangements and equipments in the way of buildings, etc., were far behind what obtained in Canada and the United States; (3) Class distinction; he was amazed and pained to find very few children of the wealthy and educated attending any Sabbath school or Bible class, almost all being the children of the poorer classes, for the former would not let their children come in contact with the latter; (4) Long vacations in Sabbath schools—all the congregations he had visited had vacations of Sabbath schools from three to five months every year, while some were open only half of the year; this was most detrimental to the work; (5) He was shocked at the amount of open Sabbath desecration in the large towns and cities. In Glasgow, e.g., the street railway runs just as on a week day. Hundreds of groceries and candy stores are open and doing a rushing business, and no one seems to care about it. He had heard much of Scotland's strict Sabbath observance before he had gone over; but what he saw with his own eyes showed that a great change for the worse had taken place of late. Over against this, however, he placed as deserving of much praise two things—the large number of young men and women found in Bible classes, and the prominent place given to the Shorter Catechism.

Comparing Scotland and Canada in respect of Sabbath schools, he held that Scotland had more to learn of Canada than Canada had to learn from Scotland.

The first item on Wednesday was a Bible class taught by Rev. A. McGillivray, with special reference to his methods, which were to be criticised by the Convention at the close. The result was a very general expression of approval.

Next came an address on "Music, its Use and Abuse in the Sabbath School," by the Rev. James Hastie. An indispensable condition was absent for the successful application of music to the Sabbath school, he held, viz., its not being taught in the day school. Music as a science should be taught in all public schools from the primary grade up to the high school. Children should be taught to read music at sight as they are taught to read books at sight. Examinations on this subject should take the same rank as examinations in grammar, geography, etc., for promotion to higher forms and for teachers' certificates. If the present crowded curriculum can give, it no place, something might be profitably dropped or obliged to make room. Were this generally done in schools several benefits would result. (1) It would act most beneficially upon the spirits and *morale* of the scholars—ruffled temper would be calmed, coarse natures refined, and the school room would be lifted up into the atmosphere of home life by these singing