

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

THE BUSH BURNING BUT NOT CONSUMED.

BY W. A. M.

The angel of the burning bush was "The God of Abraham." This was then another of those "symbolic manifestations which prepared the way for the appearance of the great mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh." But what special significance did it possess to Moses on this occasion? It was undoubtedly to Him a symbol of the present condition and future destiny of Israel. The bush burning yet unconsumed told him of God's people in Egypt enduring severe fiery trials yet preserved through Him who dwelt with them even in their bondage. This made the vision ever after a source of encouragement and support to Moses. For, at the close of life, when giving his farewell blessings to the tribes, his richest benediction upon the sons of Joseph was to wish for them "the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush."

The "Burning Bush" is the official and time-honoured symbol of the Presbyterian Church. Our fathers of the reformation in the day of their sore straits, sufferings, and persecutions chose as their motto, the representation of the burning bush with the words of the old Latin Bible round about it as its scroll, "*Arde tamen consumebatur*," yet it was not consumed. To this symbol the history of our Church has been strangely and nobly true. This symbol, more perhaps than any other, has been dyed in blood, not in the blood of our Church's enemies, but the blood of her own anguish. The Presbyterian more than any other has been the Church of martyrdom; trampled in her struggles for the freedom of man's mind; trampled but rising again, "burning but not consumed." She has been justly called the mother of freedom—the freedom of the soul of man; fighting ever for this—that Jesus Christ, and He only, is Lord of man's conscience, and King and Head of His Church. This great truth is growing to-day, growing in Methodism, in Congregationalism, and in Evangelical Episcopacy, and we care not under what name it grows. Thank God that the truth so often crushed to earth has risen again and is flourishing. But it ought not to be forgotten by what Church's bloodshed and sweat of anguish the seed of this truth was sown. Those Waldensian heroes, in whose honour Milton sang, and who amid their Italian hills, "kept God's truth so pure of old," before there was any "Reformation" elsewhere in Europe—they were Presbyterians; and their motto was the *bush burning in the wilderness*. Those Huguenot men who saved France, and whom France to France's endless loss and shame, crushed down in blood on the day of St. Bartholomew—they also were Presbyterians, the men of the burning bush. They, who from Germany and Puritan England, and the Scotland of the Covenant saved the world's liberties—they too were the Church of the Burning Bush. Where in modern history has there been heroism or martyrdom for principle like this? God's holiness, God's sovereignty, God's redemption of man through Christ's atonement, God's exclusive right to control man's conscience—these are the truths to make men heroes—a family tree with God's glory on each branch, "a bush burning," but by God's power and love upheld and "not consumed."

DR. CHALMERS—A CORRECTION.

MR. EDITOR,—The general excellence of the notice of Dr. Chalmers, which appears in to-day's "Presbyterian," from the pen of Dr. Irvine (late of Hamilton, I presume), induces me to correct a slight inaccuracy which occurs in it. In proof of my fitness to do so, I shall merely say, that besides being a native of the city of Edinburgh and educated at its University, I attended the last students' birthday breakfast in honour of Chalmers, presided over by my friend, Mr. John Mackintosh of Geddes, the brother-in-law and "Earnest Student" of Dr. Norman McLeod, in March, 1847, and, like many others now labouring within the Dominion of Canada, attended his funeral in June of the same year.

Dr. Irvine's first sentence is, "Dr. Chalmers was Principal of the University." This he never was. Let me explain. Succeeding Principal Wm. Robertson of historic and ecclesiastical fame (the granduncle of Lord Chancellor Brougham and Vaux), came, to the disappointment of Dr. Hugh Blair (of the Sermons),

Principal George Baird, who along with late Dr. Robert Gordon and others, was one of the ministers of the High Church (East St. Giles), Edinburgh, as Principal Robertson with Dr. J. Erskine was one of the ministers of Old Greyfriars Church, now uncollegiate, and afterwards held by Dr. Robert Lee and others. Principal Baird had a practice of weeping when in the pulpit, and on the occasion of the visit of King George IV. to Scotland, in 1820, when he resided at Holyrood Palace and attended divine service in the High Church, Dr. Chalmers made the humorous remark that it would be "George Baird to George Rex greeting" (*Stolice*, crying)—a less savage joke surely than Sydney Smith's remark to Bishop Selwyn, then recently nominated to the Diocese of all New Zealand with the Cannibal Island of the South Pacific, that if hungry after any of his Episcopal visitations, he would probably be informed by some of his parishioners that *there was old man upon the sideboard*!

Principal Baird took an active and generous interest in the Highland Society's schools and education generally, as befitted his position, and was succeeded by Principal John Lee, a man of high character and great research, who was minister of the Old Church (South St. Giles, then divided into four churches with five ministers), the church in which Knox's pulpit stood, and Regent Murray's tomb is. Dr. Lee succeeded Chalmers in the chair of Divinity after 1843, and was the father of the present Professor of Church History in Glasgow University, and also of Sheriff Lee, procurator of the Church of Scotland. To Principal Lee succeeded Sir David Brewster, who was followed by Sir Alexander Grant, Bart., presently in office.

Dr. Chalmers, however, was Principal and Primarius Professor of Divinity in the new College, Edinburgh, an institution which does not issue degrees like our Queen's College and University, Kingston, but bears the same relation to Edinburgh University that Knox College, Toronto, sustains to Toronto University. The enforcement of the Law of Tests in respect to non-theological chairs in the Scottish Universities at that time tempted some to contemplate a full University Staff at the new College, and Chairs of Natural Science, Logic and Metaphysics, and Ethics, together with Classical and Mathematical Tutors, existed for a few years. But the mind of the Church was decidedly against the continuance of such arrangements, and the New College, Edinburgh, now restricts itself entirely to Theology and cognate branches. The degree of B.D. may be obtained at the Scottish Universities by Divinity students of all denominations after one session's attendance at some one or other of the University Divinity classes, and possibly even that is not now indispensable and may be optional. But the New College never professed to be a University, never applied for a Royal charter, or contemplated any such step, to the best of my knowledge. R. T.

Drummondville, Oct. 17, 1879.

HOME MISSION DEFICIT—A REPLY.

MR. EDITOR,—Permit me, as briefly as I can, to reply to the letters of "Presbyter" and "Another Presbyter," regarding the deficit in the Home Mission Fund.

It is alleged by these brethren that the Home Mission Committee have not done all they might have done, to reduce the large indebtedness resting upon the fund; that their policy of doing nothing is blameworthy; that they have retired in dignified disappointment to mourn over an unwilling people; that were the defaulting congregations visited and canvassed, the entire difficulty would be removed; and finally, as one says, "if the Committee see no way out of the difficulty there is another course open to them besides simply retiring for six months." The other course that is open to them is not indicated, but I presume it means resignation of their trust into other hands.

I am sure that the writers of these letters are actuated by the best of motives, and are warm supporters of the fund, but I cannot think their strictures upon the Committee in the least deserved. The decision complained of was arrived at after twelve hours' earnest deliberation, when every possible plan for meeting the emergency was discussed. The minutes also show that every member, minister and elder was present, and the resolution was adopted with but one dissenter.

The appointment of deputies to visit not only defaulting congregations, but all the congregations of the

Church, has again and again been tried. In many cases, doubtless, the results were encouraging; in many the reverse. In some cases the deputies selected by the Presbytery, to co-operate with the delegates from the Home Mission Committee, could not fulfil their engagements at the date appointed; in other cases the delegates from the Committee could not meet the congregations on the days appointed by the Presbytery; in other cases, ministers and congregations plainly intimated that they neither desired nor required the visits of a deputation, while by others the appointment of deputations by any Committee without the express sanction and instructions of the General Assembly was strongly condemned. Presbyteries are jealous, and not without good reason, of infringing upon their special work. If the Home Mission Committee are at liberty in every strait, to send deputations to every congregation in the Church, or to non-contributing congregations, why not the Foreign Mission Committee, or the French Evangelization Committee, why not, indeed, every committee in the Church? I am far from saying that there have been too many special appeals to our churches, but the feeling is very general that spasmodic efforts to make up deficiencies may be carried too far, and that in proportion as one scheme is temporarily benefited the others suffer.

I agree with much your correspondents say regarding the inadequate results of circulars, no matter by whom prepared. The remedy for such deficits in the Home Mission Fund and other funds of the Church, lies neither in circulars nor in deputations, but in Presbyteries, ministers and office-bearers dealing faithfully with their respective congregations. If a pastor cannot impress his people with the greatness of the work, and evoke their liberality, or if he has so little interest in the schemes of the Church, as never to speak of them from his pulpit, it is vain to expect that other methods will be successful.

The names of non-contributing congregations to the Home Mission Fund and other funds of the Church, are known to Presbyteries. The Presbyteries have, furthermore, been enjoined to take order that opportunity be given in every congregation within their bounds to contribute to the Home Mission Fund. At the close of each year, when the financial statements come into the hands of the Presbytery or clerk, nothing surely is easier than to note defaulting congregations, and deal with them, if necessary. It is surely reasonable to suppose that Presbyteries will be able to deal with such congregations more intelligently than any deputation of a committee, however wise and prudent. The condition of every congregation within their bounds, as to means and ability to give, and the best method of approaching such congregations, are matters that come more properly within the jurisdiction of a Presbytery than any Committee of the Church.

A few years ago when a debt of \$10,000 rested upon the fund, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to assess Presbyteries their proportion of the amount, and enjoined Presbyteries to secure said proportions from congregations within their bounds. This action met with a fair amount of success. But it was very distinctly understood that such a method of meeting a deficit should not be repeated, and ministers not a few plainly said, that if repeated, their congregations would not respond.

In March last when the Committee found themselves involved to a like amount, a similar resolution to the one agreed upon in October, was proposed and only lost by one vote.

After lengthened consideration, it was moved by Mr. T. W. Taylor, seconded by Mr. J. Laing:

"Whereas the Committee, at its meeting in October last, resolved that in the event of sufficient funds not being forthcoming prior to the March meeting of the Committee, they would be under the necessity of deducting a percentage from the claims of all Presbyteries for supplemented congregations and mission stations for the half-year ending 31st March then next, so as to equalize the expenditure with the income for the year. And whereas the amount received up to this date is the sum of \$18,500, which falls short of the amount necessary to pay in full the claims upon the fund by the sum of \$22,000, the Committee, in view of that fact, and the small prospect, judging from the experience of the past three or four years, that the contributions yet to be received before the close of the financial year will meet the deficiency, while expressing their deep sympathy with those labourers who may suffer so severely from the results of the action now forced upon the Committee through the Church's failure to give a hearty response to their urgent appeals for more liberal contributions, resolve to appoint a sub-committee to meet during the first week in May next and reduce all claims of Presbyteries for supplemented congregations and mission stations for the half-year ending 31st March next by such a per-