

Our Contributors.

PRESBYTERIANISM ON THE COAST—VICTORIA AND NEW WESTMINSTER.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Presbyterianism in Victoria is represented by two congregations and a group of mission stations. The First Church became vacant in July last through the death of its pastor, the Rev. Donald Fraser, as useful a minister as ever served Presbyterianism in the great West. St. Andrews has for its pastor the Rev. P. McF. McLeod, and the universal testimony on the coast is that Mr. McLeod has done good work. The group of mission stations is ministered to by the Rev. D. McRae, the Clerk of the Presbytery of Columbia. Mr. McRae's home is brightened and blessed by a helpmeet who takes pleasure in entertaining clerical tourists from "Back East." In fact his house is a kind of resting place for Eastern Presbyterians, lay and clerical. Whether any of the strangers prove to be angels or not I cannot say.

St. Andrews Church is a massive structure of red brick, built in the well-known Gordon and Helliwell style. It has seating accommodation for 900. In the rear of the main audience room there is a spacious lecture-room, Sabbath school-room, vestry and all the other rooms usually found in connection with a modern, first-class city church. Taking it all round, outside and inside, St. Andrews, Victoria, is about as good a place to preach the Gospel and do church work in as any minister or congregation could want. The congregation is said to be the wealthiest in the Presbyterian Church in proportion to their numbers.

THE FIRST CHURCH

is located in perhaps the best position in Victoria. It stands right in the centre of the city at the intersection of two of the principal streets, and its surroundings are first-class. The audience-room seats 600 comfortably, and there is a commodious school-room in the rear. The congregation, and indeed the Presbyterianism of the coast, sustained a severe loss by the death of Mr. Fraser. He was a genial, kindly man, a good pastor, a true friend. His seven years of service on the coast were of great value to the Church. Wise in counsel, kindly in his dealings with men, with good business ability and a thorough knowledge of the field, he was a most valuable member of the young Presbytery. Like a true soldier he fell at his post. Working as best he could up to the very last hour, the suddenness of his death was a severe shock to his many friends. He sleeps his last sleep in the beautiful cemetery of the city he served so well, and I am sure the Presbyterians of Victoria will deal generously with the loved ones he left behind.

NEW WESTMINSTER.

About half-way up the steep hill side, on which the Royal City of Westminster is built, stand St. Andrews Church and manse. The church property, like almost everything else in the Royal City, is immensely respectable. The church is a solid brick building with seating capacity for 600. The lecture-room is comfortable and commodious, and the manse quite as good as the average manse Eastern ministers are privileged to live in. Pointing to St. Andrews Church the most sensitive Presbyterian in New Westminster need not be ashamed to say to the most "toney" visitor, That is our church. I think I know a few places in Ontario older than Westminster in which Presbyterians would not take much pleasure in showing their church property to visitors.

A second congregation has recently been formed in the Royal City, and is under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Mills, formerly of Sunderland, Ont. The Royal City is of course too staid and respectable a place to indulge in any such eccentricity as a "boom," but it grows and grows rapidly. If it keeps on growing there will be ample room for two congregations in a short time. Church extension is the right policy in a town that went up in population from 1,500 to 6,641 in the last ten years. Modes of working that are proper and praiseworthy in a growing community may be mild ecclesiastical insanity in a stationary or declining population.

Statements are frequently made about the state of religion on the coast that seem to me not a little peculiar. Peculiar may not be exactly the proper word to describe them, but I wish to exercise more charity in referring to the statements than those who make the statements display in dealing with the people on the coast. I spent a month on the coast, and during that time allowed very little grass to grow under my feet. I saw the representative people in four congregations, and all the people in one congregation several times. My deliberate opinion is that, considering the opportunities of some of the people some years ago, and the special temptations to which many of them are now exposed, the Presbyterians of the coast are just as good as Presbyterians anywhere else. I cannot say anything of the other denominations for I know nothing of them. There is a Methodist church in Victoria that cost nearly \$100,000. The people who erected that magnificent building and are paying for it must have a fair share of working piety. Victoria is not the kind of city in which men put \$100,000 in enterprises they have no regard for.

No doubt the Churches and ministers on the coast have to contend against some special difficulties, but there are

special difficulties in all new, active, pushing communities. Whether the difficulties of a young "booming" city are much greater than those of an old, worn-out rural district in which the people are in a state of stupor is a question on both sides of which something may be said. Sin that is slow, dull, heavy and stupid may not be so visible as sin that is open, active and aggressive, but it is sin all the same. A sinner in a comatose condition is neither more lovely nor useful than a sinner who shows his colours though he may be less demonstrative. Anyway it will be time enough for Eastern people to expatiate on the sins of the coast when they have forsaken their own. None of us are so good that we can afford to throw stones at our neighbours. The people who can least afford the performance generally do the most throwing.

THE AUGMENTATION FUND.

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT KINGSTON, JUNE, 1891.

The General Assembly expresses gratitude to God for the large measure of success which has attended the efforts of the Committee during the past year, as seen in the increased number of missionaries employed, the opening of new fields of labour, and the extension of the work generally. * * *

The General Assembly regrets that the year has closed with a deficit in both the Home Mission and the Augmentation Funds, and earnestly urges on all Presbyteries to take immediate action to secure increased contributions to both funds from the congregations within their bounds. * * *

Further, the General Assembly requests its Moderator, at as early a date as may be convenient, to prepare a brief address to be read in all the congregations of the Church, and widely circulated by the Presbyteries, setting forth the great importance of the Augmentation Fund as a necessary part of the work of the Church, and entitled to the hearty support of all its congregations.

To the Pastors, Ruling Elders, Managers, Members, and Adherents of the Presbyterian Church:—

DEAR BRETHREN,—In accordance with the above resolution of the General Assembly, I respectfully ask your earnest attention to the subject to which it refers. May I not assume that, as true-hearted supporters of the work which, as a Church, we have been called upon to undertake, you share in the regret expressed by the Assembly at the inadequacy of the contributions to the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds to meet the just claims upon them? On the vital importance of both of these Funds it should be unnecessary to enlarge. As instructed by the Assembly I submit for your consideration a brief statement of the object and claims of the Augmentation Fund. For the facts in this statement I gladly acknowledge my obligation to Dr. Warden, to whose untiring efforts and those of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell in behalf of this Fund we are so largely indebted for the measure of support that has been accorded to it.

The Augmentation Scheme was instituted in October, 1883, since which time the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds have been kept distinct. There are now in the Western Section of the Church 186 self-supporting congregations which raise less than \$750 and manse when the scheme was inaugurated at the time mentioned. The congregations not up to this minimum in October, 1883, now give \$34,000 towards salary in excess of what they then gave.

As the remark is sometimes, and indeed frequently, made that congregations receiving aid from the Augmentation Fund should contribute more than they do, it may be well for us to observe that, while the average contribution per communicant over the whole Church was last year \$4.63, the average in the aid-receiving congregations was \$6.84. And they, like the other congregations, contribute to the various schemes of the Church.

The revenue of the Augmentation Scheme last year was \$22,763. Of this amount about \$12,000 came from the congregations in thirteen cities. The amount needed for this year is \$32,287, viz.: For the year's grants \$28,000, and for liquidation of debt \$4,287. This is \$9,524 more than was received last year. The Church as a whole should therefore give forty-five per cent. in excess of last year's contributions. I cannot doubt that this would be given, were it more generally understood that what is effected by the instrumentality of the Augmentation Fund is in reality Home Mission work. That this is not understood seems evident from the fact that while last year the Home Mission Fund received in donations \$7,436, and from Sabbath schools \$3,500, making from these sources \$10,936, the Augmentation Fund received in donations only \$188, and from Sabbath schools \$304, making \$492. Yet the work contemplated in the maintenance of both funds is virtually the same. Our Bible classes and Sabbath schools would do well to bear this in mind.

I ask you to observe that nearly one-fifth of the congregations receiving aid from the Augmentation Fund are in Manitoba and the North-West, a region the development and welfare of which are naturally so interesting to us all. How much under God depends on present earnestness and faithfulness in sending the Gospel to new settlements there, and in helping those who are seeking to advance the cause of Christ in its rising towns and villages. The only help received by such congregations as the following comes from the Augmentation Fund, viz.: Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Prince Albert, Moosejaw, Moosomin, Qu'Appelle, Birtle,

Treherne, Oak Lake, Chater, Deloraine, Emerson, Selkirk, Kamloops, etc., etc. The congregations in all these places are making strenuous efforts to maintain Gospel ordinances among themselves. But meanwhile they stand much in need of help from such a fund as that the claims of which I am now bringing before you.

Some congregations decline to contribute to the fund because they believe themselves to be no more able than other congregations to which aid is given. And some decline because they believe that, in some cases, congregations are by means of this fund maintained as separate organizations, which ought either to be united with others in order to become self-sustaining, or dealt with as mission stations. That there may be some ground for such objections along both of these lines we need not call in question. But, dear brethren, the Committee in charge of the fund has administered it to the best of its ability. It is composed of men in whose zeal and judgment the Assembly has the utmost confidence, and whose self-denying labour in aid of the fund should be a guarantee that they will not apply any portion of it without earnest consideration as to how it may be used to the best advantage. It should be borne in mind, in connection with this, that it is with Presbyteries that the responsibility really lies. It may truthfully be said that the Committee spares no pains to obtain necessary information, urges Presbyteries to exercise due care, and endeavours to prevent the granting of aid in cases in which it ought to be withheld. And should we allow what we may regard as a mistake or an imperfection here or there to turn away our sympathy altogether from a scheme which, in the East, is keeping Protestantism alive in many needy districts; which, in the North-West, is so effectually helping many new communities; which, over the Dominion, is encouraging and invigorating many struggling congregations; the importance of which, in short, to the whole Church, can hardly be over estimated?

Let me add one thought to what has been advanced. In some of the older settlements of our country, congregations are being more or less depleted by the removal of the young to the towns and cities, and frequently by the emigration of whole families to newer regions. Our brethren ministering in these localities have to meet many discouragements. Viewed from the human side, the keeping up of their congregations to what they were ten or twenty years ago implies greater labour and anxiety than constantly increasing numbers in the case of those among us whose lot is cast in more favoured localities where the growth or influx of population almost insures a growing membership. With those labouring in such straitened fields how heartily ought we to sympathize, praying that the want of stimulus such as the centres of population afford, and of encouragement such as increasing numbers give, may be more than made up to them through "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." And can we do less than see to it that they are kept free from undue anxiety about temporal provision for their families by enabling the Committee to increase the income received from their congregations to the moderate amount agreed upon by the Assembly as the minimum of stipend?

I am persuaded that the deficiency of last year can easily be met, and the recurrence of it provided against, if Sessions and boards of Managers will but present the claims of the Fund to their congregations. The necessities of the case appeal to us. The goodness with which God has crowned the year appeals to us. Let me address to you the words long ago indited by the Holy Ghost in regard to a matter similar to this: "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance may also be a supply for your want; that there may be equality." "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

THOMAS WARDROPE,

Moderator of the General Assembly.

Guelph, September 25, 1891.

THE JERUSALEM PRESBYTERIAN MISSION.

JERUSALEM REVIVING, PART VII.

THE UPPER ROOM.

If this mission had accomplished no more than to provide an Upper Room of worship for non-Episcopalian visitors to Jerusalem, thereby supplying a great and crying want most deeply felt by all who are not accustomed, and object on principle to stereotyped prayers and priestly absolutions, and to see the backs of the Bishop and his chaplain turned to them at solemn moments; it would on that ground alone be entitled to the prayers and support of all evangelical Churches.

In this Upper Room during last travelling season—October-May—Presbyterians and Wesleyans, Congregationalists and Baptists, Episcopal Methodists, Friends, Brethren, and even some Episcopalians, have unitedly worshipped God in spirit and in truth, and sat together at the same table to commemorate the Lord's death till He come again in glory and majesty. And oh! how greatly is appreciated the inexpressible privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper in the very city where the Son of God taught His