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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor.

Ottawa, Wednesday, Feb. 5th, 1902.

HOME MISSION FUND.

While contributions have been coming in in considerable amounts during the last ten days, the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds are still very greatly behind, and if the year is to end without debt, the sum of \$44,650 will require to be got during the month of February for Home Missions, and \$15,000 for Augmentation.

Some comparatively small congregations, that hitherto have done well for the schemes of the church, and yet have not felt themselves able to have done anything special, have indicated a willingness to endeavor to raise, within the next week or two, a special contribution of \$250, for the support of a missionary in the North West. The ministers of these congregations have taken the matter up and will see it through. There are doubtless a large number of similar congregations throughout the church that would do the same thing, before the books close on the 28th February, if ministers and sessions would let the need be known, and give the people the opportunity. Four Toronto congregations, over and above their regular Home Mission Contributions have agreed to support twelve Missionaries in the North West. If congregations in other cities of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba would act similarly, the year might yet end without debt.

Many generous individuals throughout the church have kindly agreed to become responsible for the salary of a missionary in the North West. It is hoped that all of these may find it convenient to remit the amount before the end of the month. The following is a copy of a letter this morning received from a friend in Toronto:—"It was with much regret that I learned of the death of Dr. Robertson. Having spent much time in the country, I am well posted as to its needs and as to the necessity of keeping our church fully supplied with funds for that section of Canada. Putting it merely as a commercial venture, it will be a good investment for all moneys spent on it, later on;

and the church should keep that field fully supplied, even if some of the others have got to want in the meantime, as the time is fast approaching when any money spent there to-day will come back with handsome interest. I enclose herewith my cheque for \$250. Kindly do not say who this amount came from. Simply put it in as from a well wisher, or under any heading you like, only my name is not to be mentioned. I will be always willing and pleased to help that cause."

It is the general opinion of those familiar with the country, that the next few years are the years that will tell most as to mission work. It is hoped that the committees' hands will not be tied when they meet a month hence, but that they will be encouraged, because of generous contributions received during this month, to expand the work and avail themselves of every new opening.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

Some weeks ago Mr. Hall Caine gave an address in Manchester, England, at the opening of a bazaar to raise funds to defray the expenses of contesting an election in the interests of a Labor Candidate to represent in Parliament the Garton Division of that city. His address was reported in the "British Weekly" under the title of "The Gospel and the Social Question." It would have been more correct, judging from the address itself, had it been entitled, "The Church and the Working Classes." It was a strong address; containing many rash statements, which, as we believe, are unsupported by facts. He spoke as the representative and in the name of Labor. It called forth a very considerable amount of published correspondence favourable and unfavourable in the columns of the paper which printed it, and we doubt not, much more which never got further than the editor's waste paper basket. Whether we agree with all his statements or not, or with any of them, it compels thought, is suggestive of much, and discusses a question of very great importance to the Church, one which it cannot afford to overlook.

It would be quite beside the mark to criticize the address itself in these columns for the benefit of readers who have not seen it, and when limited space precludes the possibility of quoting any large portions of it. But the subject is an important one, and though it has not as yet in Canada, reached a critical stage, is often brought up and discussed.

The speaker brings a strong indictment against the churches for not merely neglecting, but for having opposed the working classes in their efforts to obtain redress and overcome, what he describes as wrongs and grievances from which they suffer. Not only have the churches, in his opinion, never initiated any movement for such an end, but they have always in all ages opposed them. This indictment will be taken for what each one thinks it worth by those who know something of Hall Caine's writings, and then it is borne in mind that he is careful in this address to let it be known that "he is one of the vast multitude of the Labor party who stand outside the churches." It is often said

that, there is growing up amongst ourselves, what is more confidently affirmed to exist in Europe and the United States, an alienation and in a great number of cases an antagonism in the working classes to the churches. If this is so in the United States and Europe, and is gradually arising in Canada, it is a very serious state of things, and calls for the immediate attention of the churches.

The questions suggest themselves; "Does this alienation exist, or is it beginning to shew itself with us?" If so, "How has it arisen?" and, "How may it be averted or overcome?"

In answer to the first question, it may be observed that the feeling towards the churches of the working classes, we mean largely artisans, those who earn their bread by manual labour, will be greatly determined by the attitude in which the churches present themselves toward them and their interests. In all European countries, and in Britain as well, the church as a great outstanding organization, has presented itself to the people in alliance with the state often as an important part of its machinery, lending itself to statecraft, when the governing powers were unmindful of the interests of the working classes or mercilessly oppress them. In the United States the accumulation of vast wealth in the hands of a comparatively few, and some of these in prominent standing in Christian churches, while their employees by the hundreds and thousands have had a hard fight to live, has prejudiced the churches in the eyes of a large number of the working classes. In Canada the churches have been happily free from either of these unfavourable aspects in the eyes of the people. Wealth has been much more evenly distributed amongst us as yet, and the churches have not appeared as conspicuously allied with wealth or capital as against labour; and for over a generation at least, there has not been even the semblance of a church supported by the State. These are important considerations. The people have been their own rulers; the State has been the friend of the working classes; the churches have been and are very largely composed of them, and consequently there has not been, we do not believe there is now, alienation in their minds, as a class much less antagonism to the churches.

If we are at all correct in our view as to the attitude in Canada of the working classes as a whole towards the churches, the second question proposed; "How has this alienation arisen?" does not require to be answered. But although this may be so, there exists in the minds of very many extremely lazy ideas, and in the case of others also not a few, altogether false ideas of the objects for which the churches exist, and the work appointed by their Divine Founder for them to do in the world which are largely to blame for the alienation or antagonism which, there can be no doubt, we fear does exist in less favoured lands, and under less favourable circumstances than are found with us. If this is so, it is important both for the working classes and for the churches that in a matter so vital to the best interests of both, views that are wrong should be shewn to be so, and that those which are true and correct should be stated and also shewn to be