

our Church polity. Its model we find in the Jewish synagogue with its bench of elders. Its outlines are observable among those Christian communities which were from the leaven of that "mystery of iniquity" which, even in Apostolic times, "did already work." These principles were held by the refugees from the ten bloody persecutions of the old Roman Empire. Vigilantius and his followers who nobly protested against the growing corruptions of the Church in the fourth century held them. The Paulicians of the seventh century clung to them and fled to the frowning fastnesses of the Alps to escape the wrath of the adherents of the hierarchy. They were substantially the principles of the original Church in England, for when Augustine the monk was sent thither from Rome, he found Churches organized which had existed since the first century, and which, it is believed, were planted by Paul when "he took his journey into Spain."

The first form which Christianity assumed in Ireland was Presbyterianism. Succat, afterward called Patricius (St. Patrick) a Scotchman, planted 365 churches, to each of which he assigned a bishop or presbyter with a bench of elders for the government of the Church. The Culdees, whose theological college at Iona was the source whence the religion of Jesus circulated throughout Scotland were Presbyterians. Columba, the Irishman who paid back to Scotland the debt which his ten favoured isle owed to Patrick the Scotchman, sowed, in concert with twelve presbyters, the seeds of Presbyterianism in that land which is now its headquarters. Among our honoured fathers we rank God's slaughtered saints,

Whose bones lie scattered
On the Alpine mountains cold.

The Israel of the Alps, in whom was fulfilled the Patmos seer's vision of the woman fleeing into the wilderness to escape the Papal Dragon, amid the smiling valleys of Piedmont and the rugged grandeur of those everlasting hills which stood as watchful sentinels over their peaceful homes, preserved in their primitive purity those time-hallowed principles which are dear to us all, till the myrmidons of the Papacy came down like wolves on the fold, and for thy sake they were killed all the day long and counted as sheep for the slaughter.

THE COVENANTERS.

The covenanters of Scotland and the North of Ireland served themselves heirs to the Waldenses of the Cottian Alps. They were tortured not accepting deliverance. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. There's many a lonely cairn and moss-grown stone and blood-dyed hillock in the dear old land which form the mute though meet memorials of the "great wrestlings" of a cloud of witnesses. Inspired by such hallowed associations and so grand a history "now therefore let us go and tell."

CHARLES DARWIN'S STRIKING TESTIMONY.

Even "the enemies themselves being judges," missions are more than ever a power, and "let us go and tell" more than ever a duty. The simple Gospel has been acknowledged to accomplish results which mere civilization and culture could never bring about. The disciples of evolution and esthetics have tried to do the same with their enchantments but have utterly failed. Charles Darwin, though never hostile to revealed religion, as not a few of his followers have been, was at one time a sceptic, if not a scorner, as regards the utility of Christian missions. The mission to the Patagonians, the most sunken of our race, a mission that grew out of the starvation on their bleak coast of Capatin Allan Gardiner and his comrades, constrained the philosopher to confess "This is the finger of God." Writing to his friend, Admiral Sir James Sullivan, on June, 1879, he says: "The progress of the Fuegians is wonderful and had it not occurred, would have been quite incredible," and so in several letters thereafter. The Admiral says: "Mr. Darwin often expressed to me his conviction that it was utterly useless to send missionaries to such a set of savages as the Fuegians, probably the very lowest of the human race. I had always replied that I did not believe any human beings existed too low to comprehend the simple Gospel of Christ. After many years he wrote to me that the recent accounts of the missions, proved to him that he had been wrong and I right in an estimate of the native character and the possibility of doing them good through missionaries, and he requested me to forward to the society an enclosed cheque for £5 as a testimony of the interest he took in their work." That interest continued and deepened through after years (between 1867 and 1880). Speaking at the anniversary of the mission to South America in 1885, the Archbishop of Canterbury said that the society drew the attention of Charles Darwin and made him, in his pursuit of the wonders of the kingdom of nature, realize that there was another kingdom just as wonderful and more lasting. It was the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Darwin's testimony to the blessed effects of missionary labour in the South Sea is not less strong than with reference to South America. "Within twenty years (he says elsewhere) human sacrifices, the power of an idolatrous priesthood, profligacy unparalleled in any other part of the world. Infanticide, bloody wars, not sparing women or children, all these have been abolished. Dishonesty, intemperance and licentiousness are greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity. Darwin pronounces "the march of improvement consequent on the introduction of Christianity throughout the South Seas, as probably standing by itself in the records of history." The good tidings transmitted to us all the time from our various mission fields are thoroughly confirmatory of Darwin's remarkable testimony. Shrewd, calculating business men, accustomed to discount the glowing reports of enthusiastic missionaries, may perhaps be influenced more by the dispassionate spontaneous witness bearing of one, whose prejudices and prepossessions were supposed to run in another direction.

The Gospel which has wrought among the most degraded of our race results, which a Darwin repeatedly declared to be "wonderful," "truly wonderful," so "wonderful" as that had they not "occurred," they would have been "quite in-

credible," is continuing to win triumphs and to work changes more marvellous than ever; and as "this day is to us a day of good tidings" with reference to its spread—facilities of all kinds abundantly supplied. "Behold I set before thee an open door," on the gateway of every land—prejudices yielding, Churches and societies uniting, the morning light breaking and melting voices giving forth in plaintive monotone the beseeching call, come over and help us, "Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

"Now therefore, let us go and tell."

May this fourteenth Session of the Supreme Court of our United Church give a mighty impulse to all our missionary operations! Loving as we heartily do the brotherhood of the faithful and longing for a fuller exhibition of the "Communion of Saints," let us, in company with all who rejoice in the "common salvation"—do our part in ushering in the "Jubilee of the World," when

"One song shall employ all nations;
And all cry, worthy the Lamb,
For He was slain for us.
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other and the mountains tops;
From distant mountains, catch the flying joy,
Till, nation after nation, taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round."

At the opening of the Assembly proceedings a large audience was present. The people of Halifax turned out in great numbers, but only about 200 members answered to their names when the roll was called. The number, however, will no doubt be considerably increased. After a graceful though brief address by the retiring Moderator, on motion of Dr. Cochrane, the Rev. W. T. McMullen, of Knox Church, Woodstock, was unanimously elected Moderator for the ensuing year. The new Moderator has been a faithful and indefatigable pastor, and has taken an active and intelligent interest in the general business of the Church for many years. He is eminently worthy of the distinction to which he has attained, and will discharge the duties of his office with discretion and dignity. After disposing of the usual routine business of the evening, the first Session of the Assembly terminated.

In compliance with the good old custom, the first hour at the Assembly meeting on Thursday morning was spent in devotional exercises, in prayer for divine guidance and blessing. The remainder of the morning and the whole of the afternoon seditur were occupied with the transaction of routine business, to be reported on at a later stage.

HOME MISSIONS.

As usual, the evening of the first regular working day was given up to the reception of the Home Mission report, which was presented by the Convener, Dr. Cochrane. The report is more than ordinarily full in its details and gives in condensed form a view of how the work is being advanced from Quebec to Vancouver. The report of the Presbytery of Toronto gives a fuller statement than formerly and speaks of the impetus which has recently been given to efforts for the extension of Christian work. Of great interest also is Dr. Robertson's report of what has been accomplished in Manitoba and the North-West. After detailing the results of the census Dr. Robertson adds:

These figures show the Presbyterian Church has a lead of 5,200 of any of the other denominations in the Province, and that its rate of increase has been 30 per cent. in advance of the population of the Province, and also decidedly in advance of any of the larger denominations. In the country districts, where mission work is chiefly carried on, the advance is still more striking. In the North-West Territories two-thirds of the white population are Presbyterians. These figures show our progress, our responsibilities and our opportunities for advancing the Kingdom of Christ.

The summary of total expenditure for Home Missions and Augmentations, 1887-88, is as follows: Home Mission Fund, \$47,060; Augmentation, \$28,824.83; Lumbermen's Mission, \$377.70; College societies: Knox, \$3,305.42; Queen's, \$1,247.90; Montreal, Manitoba and Morrin (amounts not reported), say, \$750; total, \$81,565.85. The Home Mission Fund started the year with a balance against it of \$469, and after a draft of \$1,000 on the reserve fund has a balance to its credit of \$61.11. The Augmentation Fund shows a deficiency of \$986.37.

The report of the sub-committee on Augmentation is as follows: Although obliged to report a deficit at the close of the year just ended, the position and prospects of the Augmentation Fund are better than they were a year ago. It was necessary at that time to use what remained of the reserve fund (\$6,000) in order to pay the grants made. There was no reserve to fall back upon this year; nevertheless payment has been made in full according to the instructions of the General Assembly, with the result indicated in the financial statement—a deficit of \$986.37.

The amount realized from congregational contributions and donations is \$26,173, as compared with \$24,473 in the preceding year—an advance of \$1,700. It is satisfactory to note that this advance is not the result of spasmodic or special effort in one or two places, but that no fewer than twenty-one Presbyteries out of thirty show an increase of contributions.

Then the work done by the various college missionary societies is briefly but clearly given, and the report concludes as follows: In closing this report, the Committee would earnestly urge upon the ministers and office-bearers of our Church the necessity of keeping constantly before their several congregations the claimant demands of Home Missions and Augmentation. That the increase of our denomination, as well as the prosperity of all the other Schemes, depends to a great extent upon the liberality extended to Home Missions, is acknowledged on all hands. For the present year, 1888-89, it is calculated that the sum of \$26,000 may meet the demands for Augmentation, but for Home Missions, in view of the constantly widening field in the North-West, and the new ground taken up in British Columbia, there will be required nearly \$55,000. The

entire expenses connected with our work in British Columbia, in sustaining mission stations and sending out missionaries, falls upon the Home Mission Fund. It only needs, however, that the claims of Missions and Augmentation be candidly and fully stated to the membership of the Church to secure the means to enable the Committee to hold the ground already occupied, and advance to newer outposts.

In introducing the report Dr. Cochrane referred to the large amount of mission work done by the missionaries during the past year, and the great increase in the mission stations in the North-West and in British Columbia. The financial statement showed a balance against the Home Mission Fund for 1888 of about \$1,500, and of \$900 against the Augmentation Fund. While it was to be regretted that there was any deficit, it was a great improvement on the last year. There was a good prospect that next year the Augmentation Fund would be equal to the demands made upon it, as great interest was now being taken in the fund, and many of the objections hitherto raised are no longer heard. On the other hand, the Home Missions' obligations were every year increasing and there was urgent necessity that the Church should enable the committee to meet the demands made upon it by more liberal contributions to the fund. He also referred to the grants received during the year from Great Britain, the special donations given to help the committee in view of the deficit of last year, the formation of women's missionary societies and the good work done by the college missionary societies. He appealed to the Assembly to do all in their power to keep the Presbyterian Church in Canada in the forefront of missionary enterprise in the newer Provinces and territories of the Dominion, such as it had been privileged to occupy in the past. While they had raised \$81,000 during the past year the sum could easily be doubled if all our congregations did their duty. He concluded by moving the reception of the report.

The Rev. D. J. Macdonnell seconded the motion, and spoke with special reference to Augmentation. He insisted not only upon the hearty co-operation of Presbyterians, but greater liberality on the part of their richer people. There were still people in the West who hold the purse-strings and think that the scheme should not be supported, and who are always predicting its failure. It had not been a failure; it would not be a failure. Thirty-nine congregations had become self-supporting since the establishment of the fund. In closing he referred to the regulation recommended by the Home Mission Committee that in cases where Presbyteries do not pay their fair amount into the fund reduced grants may be made, and defended it from the strictures made against it.

The report was received and after considerable discussion the recommendation of the Augmentation Committee referred to by Mr. Macdonnell was withdrawn, in the hope that all the Presbyteries without such pressure will conscientiously and liberally give to the fund. It was then moved by Dr. Cochrane, seconded by Dr. Burns, and carried unanimously: That the report of the Home Mission Committee, Western section, be adopted as a whole and that the thanks of this Assembly be given to the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland, for their generous aid during the year. Further, the General Assembly desires to record its gratitude to the great King and Head of the Church for the continued success that marks the Home Mission work of the Church, and the steady growth of the stations and congregations in the more destitute and remote parts of our land, and also for the increasing interest taken in the Augmentation Scheme earnestly commends again the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds to be increased liberality of the members and adherents of our Church, so that sufficient means may be secured for the still further prosecution of this great work.

On Friday morning the principal business taken up was the consideration of overtures on the

SUPPLY OF VACANCIES.

Those from the Synod of Toronto and Kingston and the Synod of Hamilton and London were read, suggesting certain rules and regulations for the better supply of vacant congregations. An overture from the Presbytery of Brockville was also read, asking the Assembly to take steps to prevent candidating in vacant charges. Drs. Proudfoot and Cochrane were heard in explanation of the overture from the Synod of Hamilton and London, and earnestly urged the Assembly to take immediate steps to adopt some such plan as would prevent long vacancies and the danger of destroying some congregations altogether. After speeches by Dr. Reid, Dr. McCrae, Mr. Bruce, Principal Forest, Mr. Drysdale, Dr. Caven, Mr. Hamilton Cassels, Mr. Wilkins and others, a motion made by Dr. Caven and seconded by Mr. Bruce was carried, to the effect that a committee should be appointed to take the overtures into consideration and prepare a remit on the whole subject, which, if approved by the Assembly, shall be sent down to the Presbyteries for their judgment during the year and report to the next Assembly. Dr. Forest, of Dalhousie College, seconded by Mr. Sedgwick, proposed to summarily dismiss the overtures, but withdrew this motion, until at least the committee report their remit to the General Assembly. During the debate on the overtures, especially that from the Synod of Hamilton and London, it was somewhat amusing to hear certain members of the Assembly speak of this matter as a trifling one and not worthy of the consideration either of the Assembly or the Presbyteries. No question for many years has been so much debated and no evil so much deplored in the Presbyterian Church courts as well as in both our secular and religious prints. Many worthy ministers in the Canadian Church have been going round vacant churches for years who, had they been brought into contact with congregations by some wise arrangement, would have had their usefulness greatly extended, and congregations now scattered and agitated by ceaseless candidating would have been preserved to the body.

(To be continued.)