

ferred to find their own supply, and ministers who preferred to find their own work would be at liberty, and they would be aided by the bureau, and there would be no need of the probationers' scheme. This scheme would be simple and comprehensive. All congregations desiring would be placed under pastoral care, and all ministers desiring it could be usefully employed. We would require to recognize the fact that ministers can do pastoral work without being inducted, and congregations can be benefited by their ministrations without the aid of this ceremony. Indeed this solemn ceremony has become to a great extent an empty form. A case occurred recently of a minister taking upon him the solemn vows of induction and within three months after he preached as a candidate in a vacancy.

A minister was inducted over a mission field. He solemnly vowed before Heaven to accept the charge and discharge its duties. The congregation standing up unanimously accepted him as their minister, and solemnly promised to maintain him. After three years had passed the minister was told by one of the leading ecclesiastical lawyers of the Church that his induction was an empty form and had no meaning whatever, because he had not been called in due form; that he was simply the employé of the so-called congregation who did not represent more than one eighth of the money paid for his support, nor one tenth of the people to whom he ministered. That the people were required to take a vote annually after the first year, and decide whether they would "hire him for another year or put him away," as they expressed it. This might appear to be as absurd as to declare a marriage ceremony to be null and void merely because all the preliminaries of courtship had not been gone through in due form. Yet this was the ruling of the Presbytery.

It is well known that many ministers accept calls and are inducted over congregations who have no intention of remaining longer than suits their convenience. The position is simply used as a base of operations to obtain something better. Such conduct on the part of a minister may appear to be inconsistent, but there is no rule in the Church to prevent it. In the eyes of the Church a minister stands precisely in the same position in relation to the vacancies of the Church after his induction into a particular charge as he did before it. The congregation may be bound by it, but the minister is as free as ever. When a ceremony has so far lost its meaning it would in many cases be more honoured by its omission than by its observance. If this scheme were adopted there would be fewer inductions, but when they did take place they would be likely to be more permanent. They would generally be after the minister had supplied them for a year or two under this scheme, and they had an opportunity of knowing each other. Hence the relation would be more likely to be satisfactory to all parties concerned. I have a few more suggestions which I intend to make, but will reserve them for another letter.

PRESBYTER.

LETTER FROM EDMONTON.

MR. EDITOR,—The annual meeting of the Edmonton Presbyterian Church was held last week and the very full reports presented give me an opportunity of laying before your readers an outline of the work accomplished by this far away mission during the year. The new church was formally opened and dedicated to the worship of God exactly one year after the organization of the congregation. It is a commodious and fine-looking structure and is the largest church in the place. The cost hitherto has been \$2,286, of which all has been paid except \$287, and even that is covered by subscriptions which will likely be paid in the course of a few months. This money has been raised by the congregation with the exception of a loan of \$600 from the Church and Manse Building Fund, which is to be paid in two years. The church, however, is not yet complete—the painting and plastering are to be undertaken this summer, and with some minor expenses they will likely raise the cost of the building to about \$3,000. The congregation has also during the year contributed \$605 for the support of ordinances in their midst. Speaking for the Edmonton part of the congregation alone, this makes a rate of \$46 per communicant for the ordinances of religion, and a rate of \$92 for church building; in all a contribution of \$138 for each communicant, and if the rate were estimated per family the sum would be larger.

This, I believe, is very high when compared with the majority of congregations in the Church, and yet the people are not rich—the majority of those who have contributed at all liberally have come here within the last two years, and in most cases it was straitened circumstances with no prospect of improvement that drove them from their old homes. Several of these have followed out literally the scriptural injunction to bring their first fruits to the Lord.

A resolution was carried at the meeting to introduce an organ to assist in the service of praise and a subscription list circulated for that object secured \$77 on the spot.

Two Sabbath Schools have been organized during the year, one at Belmont and one at Edmonton. That in Edmonton is presided over by a talented and painstaking superintendent, but the great difficulty is the lack of children. All who belong to the congregation attend, but these are few, for the congregation is almost wholly made up of young unmarried men and recently married couples. In the public school, for instance, there is only an average attendance of twenty-five, and of these only about a third are whites. I have been trying to organize a Sunday school class of Indian children from the Te-pees who would receive instruction in Cree, and I have secured a young man who could teach them, but the thing must be managed with tact and patience for there are traces of a colour line in the community.

It is only to-day that I send the statistical and financial returns required by the General Assembly's Committee, and I find that the worthy Convener complained last year that the Manitoba returns were late in reaching him. It must be remembered, however, that ours is a country of magnificent distances and that the era of daily mails has not yet set in. By the last mail—three weeks ago—I received blank forms for the statistical and financial returns, and to-day is the first opportunity of sending them back. By the same mail—March 13—I received blank forms for other returns, from a gentleman, too, who ought to have known better, and I was asked to fill them up and return them not later than the 20th of January! We never know when Thanksgiving day is till it is over, and none of those circulars appointing certain days for collections for schemes of the Church reach us until their usefulness is gone. It will be seen, then, that it is not necessarily carelessness nor indifference to the completeness of the Committee's report that hinders some ministers in the Manitoba Presbytery from having their returns forward in time.

Many stray postal cards and circulars that come to me, antiquated and useless after their long wandering over the plains, have a curious effect in deepening my feeling of isolation. Indeed, it requires an effort for me to think of myself as a number of the Manitoba Presbytery—not one of whose meetings I have had an opportunity of attending, and not half of whose members I know. It would be idle to deny that I often feel very lonely, and not a little discouraged, but I do not carry on this warfare at my own charges. We look forward, too, with confidence to the visit this summer of the Superintendent of Missions, a considerable number of the congregation here having sat under him in Winnipeg, and we count on all the difficulties of our heterogeneous congregation and inexperienced pastor disappearing before his zeal and business ability.

ANDREW B. BAIRD.

Edmonton, Alberta, April 4, 1883.

IN the House of Commons last week Professor Foster, M.P., presented a petition bearing the signatures of 10,000 women and 6,000 men, praying that in any legislation for the regulation of the liquor traffic provision might be made that no liquor should be sold in the same place with other goods, and that no liquor be supplied to minors.

RITUALISTIC practises are again exciting considerable attention in England. At St. Matthew's Sheffield, a church warden forcibly interfered with the clergyman in the celebration of the sacrament. The police magistrate refused to deal with the case, but the Archbishop of York while saying such conduct was illegal, issued a "monition" to the Rev. G. C. Ommaney directing him to discontinue the objectionable practices. Most ostentatiously, however, he ignored the Archbishop's warning, adhering to the eastward position, mixing water with wine, and ceremonially cleansing the cup. At St. Paul's, Pendleton, Manchester, the early morning communion was not celebrated on Sunday, under instructions of the Bishop of Manchester as he was apprehensive of a disturbance.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

LONDON.

Vigorous preparations are already being made for an extended campaign, to begin next autumn, under the leadership of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. Instead of single monster central meetings, it is proposed to hold simultaneously a large number of smaller ones in buildings of about 5,000 capacity, some of which shall be constructed for the purpose, and moved from place to place. Meantime, in other places the work goes on with mighty power. On leaving Belfast these honoured evangelists proceeded to

LEICESTER.

The following is from a full and excellent account of the meetings in the "Blue Ribbon Banner":

Messrs. Moody and Sankey have now been three days in Leicester. Just as was the case with Oxford and Cambridge, Birmingham, and Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Belfast, the heart of the town and district has been stirred to the core. In view of the scenes witnessed in our streets, the question has been literally appropriate:

"What means this eager, anxious throng,
Which moves with busy haste along,
These wondrous gatherings day by day?
What means this strange commotion, pray?"

The whole upheaval is a singular tribute to the power of the simple old Gospel to turn the world upside down. The advent of the now renowned evangelists has been productive of just such marvellous effects as have followed their arrival elsewhere. They have not come of their own accord, but on the invitation of some seventy gentlemen entitled to claim that they represent Christians of all evangelical denominations. The invitation was not extended without prayerful consideration, and its acceptance sent the whole religious community to their knees to plead for a special season of refreshing from on high.

There is no suspicion of self-interested motives on the part of the evangelists to disturb the exercise of Christian faith. Their entire prohibition of the incense of popular applause, so dear to secular singers and speakers, sufficiently indicates the Divine Master whose they are and whom they serve. Mr. Sankey is a skilled musician and an accomplished singer, but if it were not the everlasting Gospel that he sings he would have many superiors and more rivals. Mr. Moody is no orator, and yet the most polished and impassioned rhetorician could not, night after night, produce the spell-like power which few fail to feel who come within reach of his voice. We saw a knot of four publicans—whose presence in the Floral Hall was not probably due to a high motive—listening most reverently; and some "hard cases," whose usual resorts are the public-house and the police court, very near the melting mood. How came it that 8,000 people were content to stay for hours in that Floral Hall, all orderly, earnest and solemnised, although largely admixed with those whom even Mr. Bright called the "residuum"? The only reasonable answer is that the Spirit of God has set his seal on the ministry of speech and song. Messrs. Moody and Sandy have personal faith in the message they proclaim, and therefore it vibrates from their hearts to the hearts of their hearers.

Moreover, in regard to Mr. Moody in particular, there is no slovenly or scamped work about him. As an honest, thorough-going man of common sense he has discovered the best methods of the business of evangelization. Not only does he believe in the Bible "from back to back" but it has been the loving labour of years to "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." His special power seems to be a faculty of deorientalising the Scripture narratives and translating them into forms that transfix the attention of us denizens of the West, so that we can almost instantaneously claim a closer intimacy with patriarchs, prophets and apostles, and learn new lessons from their lives. Intelligent honouring of the Holy Spirit, faithful preaching of Christ, the power of prayer and song, simple faith, cheerful testimony, personal dealing with convicted sinners in after-meetings; in all these things our American brothers are eminent examples to guide Christians into the way of making their heaven-born power felt, so that our era may become notable for this, that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."