

JAMAICA.

The following statements, regarding the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, are the substance of an address delivered by the Rev. Adam Thomson, of Montego Bay, at the monthly missionary meeting of the United Presbyterian Church in Toronto, on the 8th of December. At that meeting Mr. Jennings, the pastor of the church, presided, and the devotional exercises were conducted by Dr. Burns and himself. Mr. Thomson recently came to America in order to recruit his health, and we rejoice to say that, under the blessing of God, his object has been gained. Mr. Thomson left Toronto on the 11th inst., on his return to Jamaica, in the full enjoyment of strength and vigour. May the Lord prosper his way!

Mr. Thomson said he would begin his remarks by giving some account of his own church, which was situated in Montego Bay, the largest town on the north side of the island. It contained a population of about 6000. He was inducted into his pastoral charge there in June, 1850. The membership of his church amounted to nearly 100—the greater part of whom were brown people, but there were among them between twenty and thirty white persons, and a few negroes. No distinction, however, was made in the church in respect of color, and on communion occasions, there might be seen sitting in the same pews persons who once were slaveholders, and those who once were slaves. The average attendance of adults on public worship, on the Lord's day, was about 200. There was a Sabbath School in connection with the church. One of the elders, a Scotchman, was superintendent, and there were seventeen or eighteen teachers, male and female, all of whom were members of the church. The average attendance of children in the Sabbath School was about ninety. The teachers met monthly for prayer and for consultation, regarding the state of the school, and the best means to be employed for improving and enlarging it. It was some time ago suggested that a week-day juvenile school should, if possible, be established, for the instruction of those in the Sabbath School who could not read; and, when he left Jamaica, nearly £100 had been subscribed for this most important and desirable object. He had no fear that this proposed school would, ere long, be in full and successful operation. There were two excellent libraries in connection with the church—one for the Sabbath School children, and the other for the congregation at large. A prayer meeting was held weekly in the chapel, and the average attendance on that occasion was about sixty. He had also two classes for religious instruction—one for males and the other for females. These also met weekly, on separate evenings. The average attendance on each of these classes was about twenty. There was in connection with the church a Christian Instruction Society, consisting of about twenty members, all of whom, with the exception of himself, were ladies. The members of the Society visited careless and ignorant persons throughout the town—read the scriptures to them—circulated religious tracts among them, and urged on their attention the importance of divine things. The Society met monthly, at which written reports of their visits were given in and read. He anticipated much good, under the Divine blessing, from the operations of this Society. He was happy that he could speak in favorable terms regarding the financial affairs of the church. It was self-supporting, and he had reason to hope would continue to be so. Besides the contributions obtained for the maintenance of Divine ordinances, about £30 were subscribed yearly for affording relief to the destitute sick in connection with the church and congregation. These were the principal matters having reference to his own church, which it occurred to him to mention. Perhaps they might think the church was small, and so it was; but when it was considered that it was the most recently formed of any in the town—in which there were two Episcopalian, two Baptist, and one Methodist Chapels, and a Jewish Synagogue, with a population of only 6,000—the comparative smallness of its size, in respect of numbers, would not be wondered at. However, there was room for improvement in this respect, and he earnestly hoped that, by the blessing of God, on the exertions of those connected with the church, not a few of whom, he rejoiced to say, are exceedingly zealous and devoted, they would be gradually augmented, and, “walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, be multiplied.”

In Montego Bay there was an Academy, maintained by the Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland. It was established some years ago for the purpose of training young men as teachers. Seven or eight lads who were educated in that academy, were now employed in

teaching schools throughout the island. He had been present at the examination of some of these schools, and was delighted to witness the efficient manner in which in almost every instance, they were conducted. He did not say that they were equal to the schools in Scotland or America. It would be unreasonable to expect this, but still, taking all circumstances into account, they were very respectable, and, in the natural course of things, might be expected to improve. When he left Jamaica there were in the academy in Montego Bay, twelve missionary students, and thirty-two public scholars. All of the missionary students were either black or brown, and most of the public scholars were white boys—the sons of the most genteel families in the town. Indeed the fees of the academy had been hitherto so high, that few others were able to avail themselves of it—it being, and having been intended to be, regarded as an institution of a somewhat advanced and superior description. The scholars competed with each other, in the several classes, without respect to color; and at the semi-annual examinations, the black scholars carried off at least an equal number of prizes with their white competitors. Indeed, he had again and again questioned the Rector of the academy regarding the comparative abilities of the white and black scholars, and the decided opinion of that gentleman was, that there was little or no disparity between them, in so far, at any rate, as the studies pursued in the academy are concerned. He had now been upwards of eleven years in the island, and as he had been engaged as a teacher during the whole of that period, he had possessed the most ample opportunities of forming a deliberate and enlightened opinion on this point. Mr. Thomson added, that since he himself went to Jamaica, he had been more or less connected with the academy in Montego Bay, and he felt bound to say, that his own opinion entirely coincided with that of the Rector. Probably it would be found that the blacks were inferior to the whites in the higher branches of learning, and were deficient in that grasp of intellect and acuteness of mind, which were the results of a well-educated and polished state of society. But this was only what might naturally have been expected, and ought not to produce a too unfavourable impression regarding the susceptibilities of the negro, for indefinite improvement in all the arts and sciences of civilized life. The Mission Board in Scotland had recently appointed a Theological Tutor for the academy, whose duty it would be to instruct the more promising and pious young men in theology, and endeavour to train them for the ministerial office. The gentleman appointed, left Scotland on the 18th October last, and by this time, he hoped, had reached Jamaica in safety. It was extremely desirable that a native ministerial agency should now be reared in the island. It was not to be expected that persons would always be found to go from Scotland to fill the vacancies that were perpetually occurring in the church in Jamaica, nor would it be reasonable to ask the negro congregations there, at least in present circumstances, to raise the large stipends absolutely required by European ministers; and for these as well as other reasons, it would seem that the period had now arrived when it would be the wisdom of the Home Church to concentrate its energies, in order to educate natives of Jamaica for the pastoral office, as well as for that of a mere teacher. He greatly rejoiced, therefore, in common with all his brethren in Jamaica, in the appointment of a Theological Tutor, and earnestly hoped that his labors would be crowned with abundant success. “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”

Having given those details regarding the Church and Academy in Montego Bay, with which he was more immediately connected, Mr. Thomson proceeded to lay before his audience some information regarding the Mission at large. He stated that there were in Jamaica 19 regular Churches—exclusive of out-stations—connected with the Presbyterian Mission. Some of those, however, were at present without a pastor. The number of members, in full communion with these Churches, was very nearly 4000. About three-fourths of these might be negroes. The remaining one-third were either brown or white, but principally brown people. There were Sabbath-schools and week-day prayer meetings in connection with all the Churches; and these were in general pretty well attended. In one instance there were no fewer than 10 week-day prayer meetings connected with one of the mission stations, and at many of these meetings the services were conducted by people of colour. There were besides, upwards of forty week-day schools, and about fifty teachers—male and female—in connection with the mission. The teachers' salaries were paid partly by the Mission Board in Scotland, and partly from the school fees. He was sorry to say, however, the schools were neither so numerous, nor so regularly attended as they might, and as they