

of the Church of England; bearing witness, that it is a maxim universally adopted by all juriconsults (that is, all those professionally conversant with the law), that church property is sacred—that to devote it to the enriching of the public treasury—that is, to secular purposes—is an appropriation upon which the blessing of God has never rested—that our fatherland, even in times of the greatest violence, repudiated such an act, so far as the rapacity of individuals and corporate bodies would allow; and that in recent times, when a redistribution of church property was thought desirable, not one penny was alienated from religious purposes, and why? because Protestant England adopted and revered the maxim, that church property is sacred, and consequently felt that the secularization of it would be an act of sacrilege. Now what is the meaning of this word sacrilege? Johnston defines it to be "The crime of appropriating to himself what is devoted to religion—the crime, he adds, of robbing heaven." Heedless avarice or covetousness may prompt erring mortals to the commission of such a crime; but whoever calmly reflects upon it, and keeps in mind the fact which Chevalier Bunsen has asserted upon the evidence of historical records,—namely, that the blessing of heaven has never rested on it—must surely regard it with utter abhorrence; and although the secularization act does not allow of the direct reappropriation of the fund by the municipalities to its original purpose, this is certain, that it does not prohibit any individual from making voluntary restitution.

It may, however, be said or thought, that even if the principle of restitution advocated by your committee were admitted under the circumstances to be perfectly correct; yet that the benefit accruing to each individual of the community is so insignificant that compensation would not be worth collecting; and hence, that the thought of restoring God's portion may be unceremoniously dismissed. Your committee are however, at a loss to perceive how this view of the case, even supposing it to be correct, can be urged with any force or propriety against the principle of voluntary restitution. It seems to them rather to prove and make manifest the feasibility of the act; for if the benefit received by each individual, and consequently the amount to be restored be indeed trifling, it is most obvious, that no one can plead inability, to free himself from the guilt of so base and traitorous a betrayal of his church. Under the Mosaic dispensation a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, was an offering not despised, and when withheld, God said by the mouth of his prophet that his people had robbed him; and the widow's gift of two mites,

which make a farthing, we know, received our Saviour's highest commendation.

Nor, though it may be true that the sums to be restored are individually small, can your committee admit that the aggregate would be trifling. From what has lately transpired, it appears that the appropriations to three municipalities only of this district amount to no less than £17,000, and it is by no means an extravagant calculation that an equal amount has been divided amongst the remaining municipalities of the district. This would give £34,000 as a first instalment; but we take it at £30,000, to be quite within the mark. Now it has been well ascertained from the census returns, that the adherents of the church number about one-third of the whole population of Western Canada; and supposing them to be on a level, in point of intelligence and wealth with those who dissent from her communion, your committee feel justified in assuming that £10,000 is a fair and moderate, if not an under estimate of the benefit derived by the members of the church in this district from this source; and this sum invested at the ordinary legal interest of six per cent. gives an annual income of £600, which would go not a little way towards maintaining two travelling missionaries and circulating the holy scriptures and other religious books and tracts in the district. Hence, though the amount of restitution may be individually small, yet in the aggregate it would not be trifling. Let each subscriber of one dollar only give two in future—that is, about the value of two bushels of wheat or of two days' labour—and others in the same proportion, and the thing will be accomplished, and not merely so, but you will free yourselves from the guilt, the crime, the infamy of sacrilegious avarice.

Much more remains to be said upon this subject, but time warns your committee to draw to a close; therefore, only adding that they have no desire to dictate in this matter, and commending the suggestions that have been made to your serious consideration, they respectfully submit their report.

D. E. BLAKE, *Chairman*.

Thornhill, Jan. 14, 1857.

The Rev. R. L. Stephenson, A. M., gratefully acknowledges the presentation, by John Hamilton, Esq., to the Church of the Holy Trinity, West Hawksbury, of a handsome stone font, of the Octagonal form, and which was manufactured by Rowe of Exeter, England.

Also, a donation of £3 15s. from Mrs. S. Jones, of Brockville, towards the purchase of new communion plate for said church.

Such uses of worldly wealth ungrudgingly bestowed, make the Lord's house beautiful, sanctify it, and bring a blessing on the donors.

CHURCH SOCIETY MEETING.

Fitzroy and Pakenham Mission.

The third Annual Meeting of the Parochial Branch of the Church Society of the diocese of Toronto organized in this extensive and important mission was held in St. Mark's Church, Pakenham, at half-past 4 o'clock, A.M., on New Year's day, immediately after divine service. The attendance was the largest yet witnessed in the mission on similar occasions, and the attendance of the audience was a pleasing evidence of the interest taken in the proceedings.

It is however to be regretted that none of the neighboring clergy could be present, although two were expected. Such an accession to the meeting would have been highly valued, and have imparted a tone to it which could not fail to exercise a practically beneficial influence on its ulterior action. The following report was read, and, with a number of useful resolutions, unanimously adopted.

3rd Annual Report of the Fitzroy and Pakenham Branch of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto.

A retrospect of the operations of this branch of the Church Society during the past year is not calculated to excite enthusiastic anticipations for its future.

A year in which Providence showered down his gifts with an unsparing hand on the tiller of the soil, and in which he obtained a more than average remuneration for his labors, has been marked, so far as this mission is concerned, by a corresponding decrease in the amount of aid which it has afforded to the Church Society for carrying on its trying and laborious work.

The conclusion to be drawn from this much-to-be-lamented fact is, that too frequently the donation solicited is given not to the Church but to the collector; hence, its amount varies with the circumstances under which it is asked. Thus the feeling of the moment, rather than the sense of duty, is the measure of the liberality of too many. The corrective of this fault is the conviction that we are not giving to man, but to God, and that what we do give to Him He will store up to be a treasure for us in heaven against that day when we will most need it.

But, independent entirely of the reasons just stated for expecting a more favorable result to the operations of the Society in the last year, there is another which might naturally be supposed ought to have had the effect of exciting the sympathy and zeal, and stimulating the energies of mem-