

If ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." It is not more true that the saved are "saved by grace," than that God our Saviour makes them "willing in the day of His power." True conversion involves a change of thought, feeling and *choice*. Whilst "salvation belongeth to the Lord," if we would have it we must "accept the reconciliation"—must "choose life." Not so, as to death, "the second death." A person in a boat under the influence of the current above Niagara Falls would need to make prompt and vigorous efforts if he would escape, but, remaining unthoughtful as to his perilous position would, as certainly as if he had chosen it, meet a sudden death. So a soul, not making in any one way a decided choice, would move to ruin just as certainly as a neglected vessel out at sea would sooner or later strike against rocks, run into quicksands, be swallowed up of the mighty deep, or be dashed against some unfriendly shore.

The farewell charge of Moses was enforced by the consideration that their treatment of it would affect *not themselves only*. "Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." As surely as "the attraction of gravitation" is a law of all-pervasive influence throughout the material universe, so certain is it that no planet or star could run out of its right orbit without seriously affecting other worlds of matter; and, as surely as "no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself," so certain is it that human character in its progress on earth spreads an influence around it for good or for evil; that "one sinner destroyeth much good," and that a mighty influence for good may be exerted by those who cherish the spirit of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Over the farewell charge of Moses is uplifted the great doctrine of man's accountability to God. "I call heaven and earth to record that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life." In that mode of dealing with the minds of the people there was true benevolence. Never man spake with such benevolence and compassion as the great Teacher—the Lord from heaven. His faithfulness to souls was as great as his compassion was strong and tender; and his very compassion for souls often prompted him to the utterance of language and the expression of sentiments which, in the first stage of their influence, were calculated not so much to cheer the spirit as to awaken the conscience and to arouse the minds of the persons addressed. True, He delighted to speak of the love of the Father, and to invite sinners to Himself; but he spake also of the accountability of man, proclaiming e.g. to Chorazin and Bethsaida. "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by His actions are weighed; having regarded not only to the motives from which they may spring, but to the circumstances favourable or unfavourable, under which they are performed. "Life and immortality," dimly recognized in the days of Moses as the sun behind thick clouds, "is brought to light by the gospel," and "how shall we escape" if amid the light of gospel day, we neglect the great charge "choose life?" For such a choice the way is grandly and graciously clear. The encouragement to choose life is great beyond expression. John iii. 16; x. 10; Rom. vi. 23. Regarding place of abode, occupation in which to engage, and many other matters, there is often much difficulty felt before arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. But, in regard to the charge "choose life," there is no reasonable occasion for hesitation or faltering or delay. It is a matter of "life or death, blessing or cursing." "On reason build resolve—that pillar of true majesty in man"—and "choose life."

To choose life is to choose Christ, 1 John v. 12. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," John vi. 68. "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

CONCERNING A SUSTENTATION FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—In an article in the April number of the "Record," I endeavoured to show the practicability of a sustentation fund for our Church, by stating that a sum of \$10,000 over and above what is now contributed to the supplementing branch of the Home Mission Fund, would be sufficient to provide an equal dividend of at least \$750. As the accuracy of this statement was questioned at the last meeting of the

Synod of Hamilton and London, and statistics of a very different complexion put before the brethren, I wish here to show the data upon which I based the above opinion, so that your readers may judge for themselves in this important matter. We have 42 congregations which give less than \$500 to their ministers, and as it would be needful to draw a limit somewhere, I have taken it for granted that congregations would need to send in at least that sum to the general fund before they would be reckoned on the equal dividend; and surely it is no sanguine expectation to anticipate that all these 42 would be roused to new exertions in order to obtain the advantages of the fund; we have 29 congregations which give \$500 to their ministers, and I estimate that these 29 will send into the fund \$550, on these grounds, first; that they will not then be required to send in so large a contribution to the Home Mission fund, and that they will require to contribute an equitable proportion per member before they reap any benefit from the sustentation fund. We have 12 congregations which pay a stipend ranging from \$530 to \$570, and I estimate them as sending into the fund \$600, a very small increase to result from a new and improved system of finance. We have 64 congregations which pay a stipend of \$600, and I estimate them as sending in \$650 in order to receive back the equal dividend, and I think it will not be reckoned Utopian to expect this advance in many of our congregations, and those who know more of the state of our Church than I do are sanguine enough to believe that many of the above congregations will rise to the amount of the equal dividend rather than prove a burden to the fund. We have 15 congregations which pay a stipend of \$650 and \$3 which pay \$700, and I estimate all of these as sending up to the fund \$700; and here it will be seen that my calculation is modest in the extreme, for without doubt very many who now pay \$700 will come up to the self-sustaining point rather than be a debt or to the fund to the extent of \$50.

Now then for the figures:

42 congregations would receive	\$250	\$10,500
29 " " " "	200	5,800
12 " " " "	150	1,800
64 " " " "	100	6,400
98 " " " "	50	4,900
Total		\$29,400
Deducting the sum contributed to supplement fund in 1877, say		\$18,000
		\$11,400

There remains a sum to be contributed by the Church of \$11,400 or within \$1,400 of the sum named by me in the "Record." That is to say the additional burden upon the Church by this scheme would not, to begin with, be more than \$11,400. In making the above calculation I have in every case deducted the sums received by congregations from the Home Mission Fund, and I have added the amount received from the Temporalities Fund. I deduct the supplements that we may know the true state of the congregations and that I may have the right to deduct the \$18,000 from the amount required to produce the equal dividend, and I add the temporalities because it would be unfair for congregations to be reckoned among the aid-receiving whose minister received a sum of \$400 or \$500 from that fund which really placed him in the self-sustaining list. Of course I do not pretend that the figures I have given are absolutely correct, as they are based on returns by no means perfect and I can quite understand that a different result may be made out by a different process of calculation; but I do maintain that my figures are sufficiently correct to enable the Church to come to an intelligent finding upon this great question, and I firmly believe my estimate to be as near the truth as it is possible to reach in the mean time. Mr. Laing of Dundas, presented some figures to the Synod of Hamilton and London which were calculated to frighten us, but they were based on imperfect data as they only included the western section of the Church and did not take into account the temporalities fund or the certainty of an advance to some extent at least all along the line under an improved system. Let it be clearly understood that in advocating the principle of a sustentation fund we are not bound to follow out in every detail the plans adopted in Scotland, Ireland and England, but that, with their example to guide us, we are to devise such plans as shall be suited to the wants of our Church and meet with hearty acceptance from ocean to ocean. P. MCF. MACLEOD.

UPPER OTTAWA: THE MATTAWA MISSION FIELD.

MR. EDITOR, This mission it is hoped has entered upon a new and brighter era of its history. Until last summer the supply of preaching in and around the village of Mattawa had been rather scanty and intermittent. Last season by means of the missionary student, Mr. Mitchell, who was indefatigable in his labours, preaching services were held regularly, and the whole country for many miles around thoroughly explored. The good effect of this more regular and fuller supply of preaching soon began to appear in the people making proposals to build a place of worship. The public meetings for worship have, I believe, been held at one time or other in the house of every Protestant family in the place, and in several other buildings besides, all of them being very unsuitable for such a purpose. During the summer and autumn preparations for building were set on foot and work actually begun. The building which has been put up is an exceedingly neat one, and when fully finished will look still better. It was erected according to plans kindly furnished by the Rev. D. M. Gordon, of Ottawa. It is of logs, sided, built on a good stone foundation, forty feet in length, twenty-six feet wide, and eighteen feet from floor to ceiling. It is already exceedingly warm, an important consideration in a climate like this where the snow is just beginning to go, and the ice can scarcely yet be said to be moved at all; and when it is lathed and plastered inside, and bricked or clapboarded outside, it will be improved in every way. The Protestants in Mattawa do not number more than a dozen or fifteen families, of whom Presbyterians are the majority. As the village is the centre of a large lumbering district, and a great thoroughfare for men and all kinds of supplies for the shanties, assistance was sought from among the lumbermen, and in almost every instance willingly and in not a few cases liberally responded to. Five hundred and thirty-five dollars and thirty-nine cents have up to this time been expended, and everything is paid for so far, the people having wisely resolved at the outset to build according to their ability and keep out of debt, a feat so rare in these days that it deserves to be chronicled. There is still sufficient money to come in to lath and plaster the church and provide comfortable seats, and this will be done during the summer. The nearest Protestant church, so far as I am aware, is sixty miles distant.

Taking a deep interest in this mission field and in the labour of love of the handful of Protestants there, it was not only willingly but gladly that I took a hundred mile sleigh-ride to open and dedicate this church on Sabbath, the 23rd of March. It was an occasion of much interest, as was shown by the attendance of almost every Protestant in the place. Service was again held in the afternoon and on every evening of the three days of the week, the length of my stay at this time. It is a union church. It may be explained that while it is held by trustees for the Presbyterian body, it is to be open for ten years for the religious services of all Protestants, and then to become the property wholly of our Church.

The Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew regards this as a very important centre for evangelistic work, as a link between our stations in the Upper Ottawa country and those in the Nipissing district, and as Mattawa may possibly become a village of yet greater importance through the extension of the Canada Central Railway through to Lake Nipissing passing near it. A student has been obtained for the field who can be ordained as a missionary, and from his labours in time to come we look forward to much good being accomplished in that region of country. The curtailment of the Home Mission grants which has been unfortunately rendered necessary, must cripple us very much however, and more than will be the case in many other Presbyteries owing to the lumber trade, being the one great industry here on which everything depends, showing as yet no sign of revival but the reverse. It is to be hoped that other portions of the Church, not so grievously depressed as this is, will to some extent make up for our lack, and so come to the rescue of our weak mission fields and stations, and of the devoted men who labour so hard in them.

Pembroke, April 9th, 1879. W. D. BALLANTYNE.

DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

In February last I made a tour among the Mission fields and some of the shanties out north of this. The